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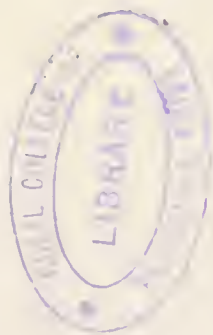
MY DOCTORS.



THE BIG-WIG OF HARLEY STREET (SIR WILLIAM).

MY DOCTORS.

BY
A PATIENT.



WITH FRONTISPIECE BY
G. DU MAURIER.



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—
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I, ME, AND HIM.

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My Doctors.

CHAPTER I.

HOW IT BEGAN.

IT was in this way. Much cogitation had confirmed me in the opinion that my health was sadly in need of repair. My heart was in a truly parlous condition; my lungs were going—or gone; my appetite was vaguely fitful; my brain was off for a holiday; irritating pricks, numbness, and general rigidity of muscle pointed most emphatically to paralysis; in short, there was every symptom of impending dissolution.

How did I find it out? Why, the fact is that I had got into a bad habit of studying the pages of the *Lancet*, and of consulting various medical dictionaries. As I read their pages, mournful convictions crowded upon my mind. There was not a disease in the whole system of Nosology from which I had not suffered in turn. "I recognize those symptoms precisely," I would say to myself; "it is exactly my own case, and it is all up with me." I should think that a judicious course of medical literature would be sufficient to drive any ordinary mind into a state of insanity.

Now, to be perfectly candid, mine was not such an extreme case as that of the old lady in the Good Book, who had suffered many things of many physicians, had

spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse. I am still a patient, and but for the Doctors I should probably have been a far worse one—or rather have ceased to be a patient at all.

The wise King truly tells us to honour a physician with the honour due to his calling, for there is a time when his advice is of good effect.

As among the blind the one-eyed man is king, so a Doctor may often turn out to be the one eye amongst those who have no eyes at all. In my own case, I had made up my mind that it must be either Death or the Doctor: and I chose the Doctor.

There is an old joke which even judges have not been ashamed to repeat from the bench, that Doctors pour drugs of which they know nothing into bodies of which they know less. If that learned judge, who repeated that old French joke at a great murder trial, possessed any inkling of scientific knowledge, he would have been aware that in our day of scientific research Doctors have a wonderful knowledge of therapeutics, and that their skill in anatomy gives them an almost perfect knowledge of the human frame. As far as I can help it, no man shall abuse Doctors unrebuked—except perhaps myself.

And what good fellows they often are. Apart from their scientific value, their professional uses, I have always eagerly cultivated their acquaintance. As a rule they have freshness and fulness of knowledge. They know the world at large, and especially they know the little world of their own district better than squire or parson. They will say and do good things for you without stint. Their visits often come as a ray of light into a sick room, the one event of the day to which the secluded

patient looks forward. How patiently they bear with the unreasonableness and disobedience of sufferers, and how often they have refused to take any fee, when they have justly earned it, and are quite aware of its value.

All this by way of Preface ; now to my story.

I was ruralizing in a pretty village some twenty miles from town. Though so near London it was as remote and sylvan as a Canadian settlement. There was a medical firm, consisting of father and son, who without any competition ruled that bucolic district—veritable Father Confessors, and accorded an infallibility which a Pope might have envied.

These two medical men were typical in their way. In point of fact the younger was the elderly man. He was grave and studious, scientific, and took life very seriously. The senior was a good-natured, pleasant man, with a smile and a joke all round. "We'll have a pleasant evening together one day," he once said, "when the old gentleman is out of the way," referring to his son. He administered pill and potion *secundum artem*, as his firm had been accustomed to do for a period of time to which the memory of man hardly ran to the contrary.

The son was fond of scientific experiment, and I sometimes reflected with alarm that he might be trying his experiments on my own vile body. Some people said that the difference between them was that the young Doctor killed you and the old Doctor let you die. The old Doctor had a large medical library of which he gave me the run, and many a restless day and night it caused me. "You might chuck every blessed book into the fire and it would be no loss," quoth the young Doctor. "It's all ancient

history. We've got out of all that. Every medical library ought to be burned at the end of ten years." Yet how those two clung to one another, and what a lot of good they managed to do. Besides their good connection, they had to send out hundreds of bills to poor people, and perhaps were paid one in three. Yet no one ever heard of their putting the law in motion to recover their just demands.

Well; the two Doctors came to the opinion that there was something very seriously the matter with me. It was not very pleasant to be told that all your days you will be subject to a chronic ailment, which cannot get better, but which in all probability might become worse. But even here the Doctors differed. The old man genially said that he thought a voyage to Australia would go a long way towards setting me right, and that I might live on to ninety and die of something else, but the younger man candidly expressed an opinion that if I started I should not live to get there. This sort of thing I have met with very often. One Doctor will often differ from another, and occasionally he will differ from himself.

On the occasion when I discussed my malady with the above-named brace of Doctors there was no difference in *opinion*. Their diagnosis agreed, though their prognosis differed. The elder was constitutionally cheerful and the younger constitutionally despondent. Just as there are hanging judges and merciful judges, so there are hanging Doctors and merciful Doctors. They both concurred in advising me to go up to London and get a first-rate independent opinion. This was very good of them. Some Doctors have an aversion to calling in further advice, mistakenly

supposing that to do so is a confession of weakness. I once met with a country Doctor who declared that he would rather let a patient die than call in another opinion. I have never met with a similar instance, and for the sake of human nature in general, and medical nature in particular, I hope there never has been a similar one.

"The beauty of going to the best London man," said despondent Dr. Tom, "is that he will tell you the very worst." Your ordinary medical attendant does not care for that sort of thing. He naturally nurses and cherishes you, in the hope of making a nice chronic case. But the consulting physician for the most part takes your fee and has done with you, and there is nothing to prevent any amount of brutal frankness. "I take a bad view of your case, and I expect that Sir William will take a worse one. He has repeatedly found out that a man is very much worse than those who knew him best supposed him to be. My father once took a case in hand, and so did I, but we could make nothing of him. Even I"—with a hardly perceptible assumption of superiority over his dad—"did not know one half how bad he was. So we sent him up to Sir William, and he tapped and rummaged him for an hour and a half, and then pronounced that he had an internal disease, and could not live beyond a fortnight. As a matter of fact he only lasted about ten days. It was so much more satisfactory to hear the whole thing clearly explained. You will perhaps find that your own case is something like it."

"Just so ; exactly," I replied, somewhat ruefully.

"It is rather rough weather for travelling, but wrap

yourself up warm, and go and see him without delay. I will give you a letter to him. I was his dresser, and also house surgeon at S. Dorothy's, and he was always particularly civil to me. But no introduction is necessary to get his best attention. He is both a man of genius and wonderfully painstaking, which is the best combination you can get in any profession."

You see, now, how closely this medical opinion coincided with my own convictions. I was evidently a doomed man. A more mature experience has convinced me that a morbidly sensitive constitution can bring upon itself every form of disease under the sun. I am a wiser man now. But this was how the thing began: and it was under this very condition of things that I made the acquaintance of Sir William—the Big-wig of Harley Street.

Such an important personage, however, demands a special mention; and here I will just trouble you to go on to the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIG-WIG OF HARLEY STREET.

I REMEMBER that when I made this special visit to London to consult the big-wig, I stayed with a young medical man who was no big-wig at all, nor has ever become one. Having obtained no special success—chiefly, so he tells me, through not having the funds to play a long waiting game, he has subsequently exported himself into one of the Colonies. He was at

this time full of science, hope, and enthusiasm—from all which he has gradually cooled down—and the happy possessor of a solitary patient. His people and mine had been friendly for time out of mind, which led to my sojourning in the same house with him.

I was much interested in this promising beginner, and he gave me a *carte du pays* of the medical world. I bethought myself of what great doctors and surgeons have said of the early days of their lives; how Boerhave said that he had crept over the shoulders of the poor into the pockets of the rich; how a great surgeon had avowed that he had waded to distinction through a hecatomb of slaughter, and how a celebrated physician said that at first he had twenty remedies for every disorder, but had now only half-a-dozen for the whole lot of them.

It was to this young Doctor that I referred my case by way of ascertaining the best mode in which to approach the great Sir William.

“He is not a bad sort of man,” said my young friend, “and will probably do you good;” speaking in that patronising tone which young men frequently adopt in regard to their seniors. His manner seemed to imply that I should have done much better if I had gone to him direct in the first instance. “He is an all-rounder, and not a specialist.”

“What is an all-rounder and what is a specialist?” I asked in those early days of my ignorance. Alas! I have been considerably enlightened since that date. “Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers,” as the poet justly observes.

“A specialist,” answered Mr. Murphy, “is a man who takes up a special line in some particular class of

disease. The drawback is that he often makes a sort of fad of it. One man is all for liver, and another for lights. One man says everything is gout, very obvious gout, or suppressed gout—often so very much ‘suppressed’ that nobody else would have guessed its existence. With one man everything is nerves; with another man everything is indigestion. The specialist puts himself into a pair of blinkers. Now the all-round man doesn’t wear blinkers. He looks at you generally, and on the whole is likely to give a fairer opinion.”

“An ‘all-rounder’ must be the best.”

“I won’t say that,” said Murphy meditatively. “He knows more of the subject generally, but he may know less of details. The field of medical knowledge is now so great that sub-division is necessary if we are to get on.”

So the conversation drifted on until it was time for me to go and see Sir William and to experience his treatment, whether circular or direct.

It was, however, by no means so easy to see Sir William. I might almost write a chapter on the Adventures of a Patient in Search of a Doctor.

I had come up to town on a Saturday, and I went to call upon him early next day. Invalidism is often a very selfish kind of existence. If I had so little regard for my own Sunday rest I might have respected that of an over-worked medical man. My only excuse is that my Doctors and my symptoms had reduced me to such a state of imbecility, nervousness and depression that I could not rest until I could obtain some authoritative opinion and directions. If I deserved a rebuff I certainly obtained it.

The bells were beginning to ring for morning service when I called in Harley Street.

The footman slightly shook his head when I explained that I wanted to see Sir William professionally. "Sir William does not receive patients on Sunday morning," he said, but added, seeing that I looked very much put out, "unless it is a very urgent and immediate case."

But as I could not say that mine was a very urgent and immediate case, I must needs be content to call the following morning. The footman said that I might come almost as early as I liked, and dismissed me with mild patronage.

So I found myself in the street again. The pavement was now full of people on their way Churchwards. So I went to Church, and felt all the better for it. I should have done better if I had gone to Church before going to the Doctor.

I was not much more successful the next day. I got down from Bayswater in very good time, that is to say between ten and eleven. This time the smart footman was exchanged for a venerable-looking butler, very like a bishop's examining chaplain. He received me with gentle sympathetic dignity, but gave a slight melancholy shake of the head as he put my name down on the slate. He said there were at least twenty people before me. I found that the dining-room was more than half full when I entered.

Into the dining-room I shambled, blushing to the very roots of my hair—why, I know not. Perhaps it was because I recognized on the faces of the company the mental comment—"Here's another of us." To increase my nervousness, I nearly came to grief over the widely-extended skirts of a fashionable dame who seemed to be taking care of a delicately-complexioned

young girl. Recovering from the shock, I made my way to a vacant seat; and from that haven—out of which I determined that no other patient should eject me—I summoned up sufficient courage to take stock of my surroundings.

The funereal aspect of the apartment at once attracted my attention. The solid mahogany furniture, the heavily-draped curtains of crimson damask, the rigid inflexibility which characterized the portraits of medical celebrities on the walls, and the general odour of mustiness—all seemed to echo the lugubrious refrain, “All hope abandon, ye who enter here.”

The chairs and sofa were covered with horsehair; who was the exasperating ruffian that invented horsehair seats? To lean back upon such a resting-place is to commence a forward *glissade* which terminates in exhibiting the occupant as a confused and shapeless mass of clothes; suggesting an obvious lack of *grip*—if I may call it so—at once unsatisfactory and unsatisfying.

Then, again, there was the general company to consider. Each individual appeared to be regarding the others with a wrathful stare strongly suggestive of a murderous hate:—probably the result of mental calculation as to whose turn would come next for the coveted interview with Sir William. Moreover, it seemed to be a point of etiquette that no one should make any attempt at conversation. For anything apparent to the contrary, we might have been so many defunct “subjects” awaiting the Doctor’s *post-mortem*.

Upon the central table (mahogany, of course) were disposed, in ordered array, copies of the *Times*, *Punch*, *Quarterly Review*, and other periodicals—most of them belonging to a past epoch. No one ventured to disturb

them ; probably they were regarded as the sole attempt at ornamentation.

I began, as a further recreation, to speculate upon the probable nature of the physical disorders in that room. Were we all alike ? or were we suffering each from his own individual complaint ? Oddly enough, we all seemed to be tolerably well—if looks went for anything—and moderately cheerful, save for the chastened solemnity aforesaid.

Presently my wandering gaze encountered a large card in a conspicuous position on the mantelpiece. It stated that the fee for a first visit was two guineas, and for each subsequent visit within the next three months one guinea.

This blunt announcement threw me into a perfect condition of flutter. The notice omitted to say how that fee was to be proffered—a very important and crucial point. To present a fee is a matter requiring *finesse*, tact, delicacy—all sorts of momentous considerations. To slap it down upon the table and to ask for a receipt on the spot, might lead to unpleasant complications. Should one lay it gracefully beside the great physician as a matter too small for him to notice ? or should one manœuvre it into the medical palm in the act of bidding farewell ? Suppose I were to drop it on the floor ? Suppose that I should forget it altogether ? In that case should I be collared by the rather reverend butler ? Or would the Doctor himself condescend to collar me ? Perhaps Sir William, at the close of the consultation, would turn his head away, gently chafe his hands, and cough a suggestive “ahem !” Then would come the bright opportunity. I would wait and see what happened.

At last I grew a trifle tired with all this speculation. Patient after patient was beckoned to or gently summoned by name. As a general rule each stayed in the Doctor's sanctum for about ten minutes, and I could see them go away by the front door. Some, however, came back to the waiting-room for something that they had left behind. One of these, a lady, showed signs on her face of deep emotion, and indeed gave a half-suppressed sob.

Once and only once the Doctor appeared in the room for a moment, and with characteristic inconsideration I rushed forward to meet him. He entirely ignored me, and said, "I should like to see the Bishop now." I could not recognize what Bishop it was, but I knew that, whoever he was, he had come in long after me, and I did not see why he should have a preference. I found out afterwards that the Bishop had done the proper thing, which I had neglected to do, and secured an appointment.

Finally, two o'clock came, with severe hunger in its train, and I was still uncalled, and there were two or three others in the same predicament. Then I took myself into the hall partly with the insane idea that I might waylay the Doctor and partly that I might vent my sense of injury on the solemn butler. That functionary was about as much moved as a tortoise might be by being stroked. He explained that Sir William was obliged to see those first who had made an appointment with him, and then if he had time—at this season of the year he generally had no time—he would see those who had none. I must write and ask for an appointment.

Just then Sir William appeared in the passage, he had

evidently had no time to get his own lunch, for he was munching a sandwich as he went down the steps into his carriage. I thought of stopping him to ask for an appointment on the spot, but he was off before I could get sufficient presence of mind to do so. I returned to the waiting-room for my wraps and umbrella and gave the information that the great man had bolted for the day, which was received with a mingling of regret and objurgation by my companions in misfortune.

"It is all my fault," said Murphy, when I told him of the morning's proceedings; "I ought to have told you that a letter would most likely be necessary. You had better sit down and do it at once."

So I wrote a letter, in the third person, with compliments, asking for an appointment, and next day I got a letter from a Dr. Nonsuch, saying that he was requested by Sir William to say that he would be happy to receive me on Saturday next at twelve o'clock, or as near that hour as his engagements would permit. So I lost exactly a week in waiting to see Sir William.

Though in a depressed state, I thought it best, as far as possible, to adhere to my normal rate of life. This is a principle that I would endeavour to impress on those who may find themselves in similar circumstances. I made some calls, saw some sights, went to a good concert, read in the new books and periodicals, and managed to pass the intervening time very comfortably on the whole.

On the appointed day, however, I had my wished for but dreaded interview with Sir William.

What is the origin of that mysterious lump which rises in the throat, and seems to jeopardise existence,

when one enters the consulting-room of a Big-Wig? Why does one affect a jaunty air, combined with a highly intensified grin intended to express a smile?

"Pray be seated," said Sir William, with a glance of curiosity at me which plainly meant—who on earth is this scarecrow?

I became seated—on the edge of a chair. I always *am* on the edge of a chair under these circumstances. Let me see the man who has the *sang froid*, in a like predicament, to take a good solid seat, lean back, and casually cross one leg over the other. Let him tell me how he manages to dispose of that confounded hat which—with me—persists in revolving in one's hands automatically.

"And now, Sir," pursued Sir William, "what can I do for you?"

A simple question. Try to answer it.

In my case, I began an involved explanation which drivelled into a final complication of incoherent language; Sir William meanwhile ruffling his hair in a state of extreme irritation, yet, withal, with a polite smile and an encouraging "pray proceed."

But I couldn't proceed. This man was too much for me. With my abhorred hat at rest—at last—upon my knees, and with the feeling that I was providing the spectacle of a hopeless imbecile, I regarded Sir William with a deferential and deprecating stare; Sir William returning the gaze with a whimsical sort of expression which only sank me lower in my own estimation. After a brief interval Sir William opened his mouth—I could see that he pitied my confused state; he was going to encourage me; saw one ever a more kindly face?—and he said—

"Why the devil can't you say what it is you want!"

Well; I told Sir William—something; I don't recollect what.

He gave me three-quarters of an hour, and I thought the fee was much too little for all the pains he took with me. Of course I had to take off my coat and waistcoat, and was pommelled, and stethoscoped, and turned round about and almost inside out. He told me that the case was rather complex, but added that he had yesterday spent an hour and an half at his own hospital in diagnosing the case of an old pauper, which he had at last succeeded in unravelling.

Sir William had quite a small library of little manuscript volumes on the shelf behind his chair. He proceeded to take one of these down, and opened a new page, which was to be devoted to myself. He then examined me and cross-examined me on the whole of my antecedent history. He even went into my childish complaints which I had entirely forgotten, but which he said might have a distinct reference to my present state of health. It was quite an intellectual pleasure to see how thoroughly he went into matters. He spoke in a grave, kindly manner, and warned me of rocks ahead, or rather, close at hand. During the winter months I must stay at the south coast, or rather, go abroad. For the present I must report myself to him weekly, and he would write to my medical advisers at home. We then had a little literary and political chat, and, when I left, the waiting room which I had found nearly empty was quite full.

"Did he give you a prescription?" asked my friend Murphy, when I related to him the events of the morning.

“Yes, and here it is.”

“Ah! I see he’s tackling you in earnest. This is what is called an elegant prescription, a nice effervescent draught. It is not always so. I once saw a prescription of his which was really nothing more than bread crumbs and coloured water.”

I was aghast.

“It was about the best thing he could do. The passion in the human breast for prescriptions is something extraordinary. The case requires careful watching, but no patient will be satisfied unless he has an immediate bolus. The only thing really to be done is to watch and wait for a few days. So it was really very judicious to try the bread pills and the coloured water.” This is called “the expectant treatment.” “My chief case,” writes a celebrated physician, “in the midst of so much darkness and ignorance is to wait a little, and proceed very slowly, especially in the use of powerful remedies; in the meantime observing its nature and procedure and by what means the patient was relieved or injured.”

Sir William had been at the pains of writing me out a careful dietary. It was decidedly sparing, and with a little alteration might have suited a prison or a workhouse. It was what to eat, drink, and avoid, but the rule seemed to be that most things were to be avoided. But there was an amiable inconsistency about him. After some weeks he was good enough to ask me to dinner, when he diligently plied me with every good thing which he had expressly forbidden.

This same inconsistency forms no small part of the mystical halo which a large experience has shewn me surrounding the members of the medical profession. I

have been told, by some of the fraternity, that cucumber ought to be peppered, salted, vinegared, and—thrown into the gutter. I fancy that this was Abernethy's *recipe*. Yet I have seen these same advisers pitching into that succulent compound with an avidity perfectly appalling. I have heard lobster-salad denounced as simple ruination when applied to the internal organization of mankind; and I have marked the denouncers making away with all the lobster-salad they could lay hold of. What is the meaning of it? I have given up the riddle long ago, and I think Sir William's feast had much to do with that resolve.

On that august occasion I had the honour of meeting several of the big-wigs of the profession, whose ponderosity was relieved by the bright presence of wives and daughters, with a few interesting outsiders. Before we left the dining-room there were frequent rap-taps at the front door, denoting the arrival of visitors for the evening.

One thing which afforded me much material for silent meditation was the striking metamorphosis which the house had undergone. The waiting-room of the morning was the dining-room of the evening. Just where that poor woman of the morning had given her slight convulsive sob, a tall elegant girl, who must almost have been a professional beauty, was sipping her glass of pink champagne. Even the awful retreat of the physician was turned into an apartment for the administration of tea and coffee. During the banquet, I furtively glanced at the corner I had occupied as a waiting patient on a previous occasion. It was embellished by a youthful medico who was entertaining his neighbours with a highly diverting story about hypochondriacs.

“Positively, my dear Madam,” I heard him say, “the fellow was as sound as a bell. But I gave him a prescription for a little liquorice-water, with a nip of quinine, and told him to be very careful not to exceed the dose. It was such a powerful medicine, you see ; ha ! ha !”

No wonder Doctors write their prescriptions in dog-Latin instead of honest English.

There was a good deal of mild professional anecdote ; I suppose it would be considered unprofessional to exceed the line of mildness. I never knew a professional man for any length of time but he was sure to drop into some story about Abernethy, just as a soldier does about Wellington. My unfortunate familiarity with the deathly pages of the *Lancet* enabled me to follow a good deal of the *Lancet* about new therapeutic agencies, and the new questions that were being raised at the hospitals. Lawyers, doctors, and parsons can't help talking a little shop, which is allowed, but very unfairly ; if scholars talk about scholarship, that is put down as pedantry.

There was a great deal of talk, too, about a certain Sir James ; who appeared to hover about the Court for the purpose of physicking Her gracious Majesty. It was he, it seems, who discovered the marvellous climate between Ballator and Braemar, and who had induced the Queen to make a Scottish home for herself at Balmoral. Sir James was a great man in his time for enforcing the duty of tubbing.

This sounds altogether superfluous at the present day, but Sir James, as an old-fashioned man, was probably thinking of distant days, when the doctrine was only imperfectly established. There is a letter preserved written by the father of Michael Angelo to

that great genius, in which he says, "Above all things, my dear son, never wash. Washing is most unwholesome." There is a funeral sermon written by the famous Dr. Donne on the Lady Margaret, the mother of George Herbert, the poet, and of Lord Herbert, of Cherburg. He divides his sermon into three heads—first her piety, next her charity, and lastly her personal cleanliness.

"Cleanliness is next to godliness." "It's a deal mair," said the old Scotch lady. Anyhow it is an immense contribution to that great thing to be aimed at—*mens sana in corpore sano*. This little digression then must be pardoned in a quasi-medical brochure. "*Sanitas sanitatum*," said Disraeli, "*omnia Sanitas*."

CHAPTER III.

OUR EXTRA SPECIAL—THE SPECIALIST.

I HAVE already said that a matured experience has shewn me the difference between a Physician who is an "all-rounder," and one who is emphatically a "Specialist." The one ranges—a very medical bee—over and among every form of blossoming disease; the other concentrates his faculties upon some particular branch of Nosology.

Consequently there are Specialists for gout; Specialists for lungs; Specialists for brain-disorders, nerves, cancer, consumption, aural-mischief, eye-ailments; Specialists for those who have nothing at all the matter with them—or anything you like to mention.

Curiously enough, they all seem to be agreed upon one point; namely, that everything is a question of "Climate." If your brains are all wrong, try "Climate"; if you are altogether upset, take a dose of "Climate"; if you are a fidgetty hypochondriac, there is one unfailing remedy—"Climate." This is why so many married men are to be found in Paris. They require rest and quiet away from all domestic cares. Paris is so renowned for its superior "Climate"; and besides, it is so very easy to telegraph to a chum to meet one there.

Unhappily, however, this concensus of opinion amongst the Specialists appears to end here: because each Specialist has his favourite locality. Some will send you off to Harrogate—to be poisoned by sulphur-water. Others will pack you off to Buxton, Bath, Cheltenham, Gastein, the Riviera, Algiers, the Canaries. They would send you to the Moon if Mr. Cook would only devise a means of your getting there. But, briefly summarized, the advice of your Specialist amounts to this:—

You *may* go about the Mediterranean as much as you like, either north or south, giving a preference to the belt of the Riviera from Beaulieu to San Remo. Then you must avoid going straight back to London from that region directly the season is over. Go to the more bracing climates, Alassio on the Italian, or St. Raphael on the French side. Or break your journey by residing for a few weeks on the eastern side of the lake of Geneva. Paris has a good climate in the morning. Don't go to Monte Carlo; it is too crowded to be healthy, and if you go to the gambling table the excitement will do you more harm than all the Doctors can do you good. Be careful; be moderate; be prudent.

Take as little medicine as possible. Let your adviser know where you are going to, and he will give you an introduction to the local Doctor. Report yourself to him when you come back.

The only difficulty about this advice is that, when you arrive at your destination and proceed to carry out the instructions of the local Doctor to whom you have been introduced, you are at once overwhelmed by the distracting recommendations awaiting you. Because each of these local Doctors especially praises the attractions of that locality in which he himself resides and practises, as if it concentrated on itself the medical virtues of the whole earth; indeed, a large number of the Doctors has each written a little book describing his locality, and vaunting it as an earthly Paradise. One learns, however, to make large rebate and deductions in literature of this description.

The genesis and development of a Continental watering-place is very simple. It probably begins with the advent of the physician who is anxious to heal himself. Then comes the parson, who acts as the means of inducing English tourists to stay over the Sunday, instead of proceeding to the larger centres. Then come the chemist, the grocer and the stationer, and the English colony is gradually developed. In this way Cannes has been developed from a petty seafaring village to a kind of Brighton.

Cannes is merely a case in point; and if I, for instance, were to say a word in disparagement of such places as Carlsbad, Ems, Wiesbaden, Aix-le-Bains, Vichy, or Royat, each has its body-guard of physicians that would rise up in defence, and do battle on their behalf against all comers.

I was once talking to the Doctor of Pendleton-on-Sea, who told me that he could put the whole subject of change of climate into a nutshell. "If you come from a northern climate you must go to the south; if you come from a southern climate you must go to the north. But in my professional capacity in this place I am obliged to tell everybody to come to Pendleton-on-Sea."

It must be added that in trying foreign travel—and the remark is equally true of a residence abroad—there is one person whose assistance towards a cure is more requisite than even the physician himself, and that is the patient. Some patients are determined to get well, and make up their minds to take every means in their power to effect their purpose.

Take for instance those patients whom I have mentioned, and who, for many years, have carried on a successful struggle against impending death. They have shown an iron will in adhering to the laws which, under good guidance, they have laid down for themselves. If they have resolved, for instance, to get up early for the fresh morning air, lassitude and even sickness will not keep them in bed. If they have settled that they must treasure their strength and health, they will resolutely refuse to enter into conversation, and carry tablets to write down what may have to be said. If the decision has been arrived at that little or no alcohol shall be taken, no injudicious persuasion shall induce them to deviate by half a tea-spoon from their resolve.

These old-fashioned rules are all excellent for many cases. I think I hear some people saying that life would not be worth living on such terms. Possibly

not. Life may not be personally valuable to you for your own sake, but for the sake of many whose interests are interwoven with your own, it is your duty to plan for it and guard it. It is heaven's high gift for which we are responsible.

And now for personal experiences.

I was recommended to go to Dr. Arbuthnot, a fashionable physician in Mayfair, who had written a book on the subject, and was supposed to know far more about climates than most men. He was emphatically a "season doctor"; was only eight or nine months of the year in London, where most of his work was done in May and June. When the fashionable world went out of town he went out too: for the Christmas and Easter holidays, and for the Long Vacation.

In this he was like the famous physician Sir Henry Holland, who always took three continuous months, during which he travelled to every region under the sun. So devoted was he to travel that he modestly determined that his professional income should never exceed five thousand a year. He would begin his work the very hour of his return from London, and would call on patients on his way from the terminus to his residence. It is interesting to know that on these visits he always carried a small box of opium pills, in order to administer immediate relief in case of pain. He was a great preacher of the doctrine of change. "If you cannot change your residence," he would say, "change your room; and if you cannot change your room, change your furniture." Sydney Smith said of his father-in-law, Sir Henry Holland, that he would start off for some months' travel with a box of pills in one pocket and a clean shirt in the other, frequently forgetting the shirt.

Dr. Arbuthnot was an especial favourite with the ladies. He was a cultivated man—more than cultivated; absolutely guanoed. He had a great collection of pictures and photographs, and could himself handle the pencil and brush. He would point out to his visitors the different famous localities, with which he was acquainted, with autobiographical touches, and with references to the circumstances of the patient's case. He was a man of "watery smile and educated whisker." He was a man of much external refinement, with much patience and courtliness of manner, as befitted one whose practice lay chiefly among the ladies.

Most of the patients who are sent abroad *are* ladies. The men have not the leisure to fancy they are ill; they have to stop at home and make money for those who are ill, or think so. Of course they go often enough, compelled, like myself, by a dire necessity, but they send the sick member of the family, under the charge of mother or sister, in case there is incipient illness, or the fear of it, or in case the lady's mind is set upon it. This particular Doctor was clever enough to follow any lead that was clearly shown him, which did not militate against the patient's real interest. He managed always to fling into his air and manner a singular disinterestedness and devotion which gave each patient the impression that each waking and dreaming thought was devoted to her case.

The house was very smart, cheerful, and even gay. All the balconies were full of flowers, and the drawing room balcony had its singing birds. A smart young footman opened the door. You went through what was almost a picture gallery to the Doctor's receiving

room, which had an abundance of pleasant and handsome things. There seemed to be this idea: "pain and sickness are mere transitory things; you will long to fling them aside like a trifling episode when once you have taken some of the delicious modern preparations which give so much satisfaction in the present day." Then if you are going abroad the talk will be of orange and lemon groves, of sea-crowned valleys, picturesque sites and light Southern wines. As I was moving through the gallery he was personally ushering out with bows and smiles a beautifully dressed lady, with an air that seemed to say, "Be assured, my dear Madam; that your thrillingly interesting case shall receive my undivided attention."

Yet those who learn to look at the face behind the professional veil would see that there was something beneath this fair outside. The eye was singularly watchful and wary, the lips, thin and compressed, being capable of a hard expression. And if you came quietly to analyse some of the Doctor's honeyed utterances, you might perceive that a *fortiter in re* was often underlying a *suaviter in modo*. When you reflected on the sentences that were said with a smile and slight musical laugh, it might gradually dawn upon the patient that the words would probably bear a very grim interpretation.

"My dear Madam," he was saying, as I was ushered into his presence, "you must consider yourself a hot-house plant. Positively for the next two years you are a flower of the conservatory. It is quite necessary, for you may lose the use of the lung."

Which sentence, being interpreted, means:—

"Yours is a very bad case. At the outside, you have

two years to live. Unless in very mild weather, you must be a prisoner in the house. Your lungs are hopelessly diseased, and one of them is quite gone."

And then the fingers close over the fee, which is gracefully slipped into his sleek paw by the wasted, fevered hand of the patient.

He treated me very kindly, for he knew all about me and mine. It is sometimes advantageous to have some connecting lines with your Doctor. It seemed rather a relief to him to favour me with a little burst of confidence. In this fashion.

"Oh, those ladies! They are very nice, but they are very, very trying. You noticed that lady whom you saw with me just as you were entering the waiting-room?"

"Yes."

"I have been talking to her for nearly half an hour, trying to persuade her to allow me to examine her with the stethoscope. It is impossible to tell her where to go unless I know the seat of the mischief and its extent. She says that she was stethoscoped last year by another physician, and she sees no reason why she should go through it all for a second time."

"And how is the point settled?"

"It is not settled at all. She is to make an appointment for another day or to send me a note."

"I have got a lot of letters here," he said, putting his hand down upon a little pile of them. "My first work for an hour or two every morning is to attend to my correspondence. Here is one lady who, instead of keeping to the point, drops into a long epistle about things in general. She wants to know whether Harvey was not the name of the great doctor who made the

blood to circulate. Now here is a letter from a lady to whom I described exactly the sort of climate that she wanted, and told her to go to Torquay. Now Torquay has several climates, and she has, of course, taken the wrong one. Instead of finding a nest under the cliffs, she has gone and perched herself on the top of a tor. If she could have stood a moderately bracing climate, I would have sent her to St. Leonard's or Bournemouth. Hers is a most delicate life; a breath that can hardly be kept alive except in the chilliest atmosphere. I should like to have sent her to the last bay of Mentone, only she would have died on the journey."

I thought to myself that he ought clearly to have described to this lady the different climates of Torquay, and have pointed out to her the locality which would suit her case the best.

Then he went very carefully over the general question of climate.

Dr. Arbuthnot certainly gave me no banter—whatever he might reserve for the benefit of his female patients.

By this time I had become quite case-hardened in the matter of fees, and got through that delicate operation with perfect facility. I ought to say that the next time I called on him he said that it was quite unnecessary that I should give him any more fees, with the practical result that I have not paid him any more visits.

There happened at this time to be a great run upon a certain city Doctor. He had been steadily at his work for years, and all at once there came the rush of a great practice. In some points of view he was the very antithesis of Dr. Arbuthnot. He was a fixture at the East End as Arbuthnot was at Mayfair. Some

city Doctors steadily look forward to moving to the West End, but Dr. Blakesley caused it to be understood that he was irremovable in his present position. Arbuthnot's chief business was with ladies, but Blakesley's practice, at least in the first instance, was limited to men. Of course, having got the men, it was only a matter of time before he had the women and children. He had none of the courtly arts of Arbuthnot, but prided himself on his roughness and frankness. To speak exactly, he had a certain brazen look about him, that suggested one who had fought for his own hand, and had always been a self-asserting individual.

I never exactly knew where he lived. One of Thackeray's heroes said he lived "down yonder," and pointed blankly into space. Dr. Blakesley lived in Finsbury Circus, and also had a bedroom there. The crush of his clients was over, as a rule, by three or four o'clock, about which time he started to see patients who lived beyond his neighbourhood. He was supposed to have a nice house and pleasant family belongings in the neighbourhood of Bayswater.

He had the reputation of possessing a very complete and systematic mode of treatment. I believe that the system was in reality a very simple one. The City men who came to him were in the habit of enjoying the common pleasures of life not wisely but too well. This physician held that all health, and all disease, was more or less a matter of food. His treatment of patients, as some often dolefully said, was a system of starvation. Many of them found his doctrine too hard for them, and went back to the sty of Epicurus. But those who adhered to his treatment generally contrived

to give good accounts of themselves, and spread the glad news to their over-fed brethren that here was a Doctor capable of renewing their wasted system.

It goes without saying that the Doctor spoke in a very authoritative way, and if he had any doubts respecting the treatment in his own mind, like many wise judges, he gave his decisions without entering very minutely into his reasons. He was very careful in his dietary tables, and was supposed, better than any man, to have mastered the whole subject of dietetics. I hardly know why I went to see him, but my friends Tom, Dick, and Harry did so, and told me that I was missing a chance unless I basked myself beneath the rays of this new medical light.

In my own interview with him, I chiefly studied his dietetic views of things.

“What do you live on?”

“I live on bread, Doctor.”

“That’s quite a mistake. Bread’s a very bad thing for you. You must eat only the driest food, or some special preparations of bread which you can get in Oxford Street. Here’s a card of the address.”

I bowed my acknowledgments.

“But you don’t mean to tell me that you *only* live on bread! That would be a great deal too fattening. What else?”

“When I said that I lived on bread, that is a *façon de parler*; I also live on meat, and a lot of other things.”

“Meat’s a very bad thing for you. How often do you take meat?”

“Oh, it varies. As it comes; I live very much as other people do.”

“That’s nothing to the point, Sir. Most people live all wrong. You are not to take meat on any pretence more than once a day. Can you eat tripe?”

“I think so.”

“You *think* so!” with great scorn. “Can you eat it or not?”

This was said with quite a cross-examining sort of way. The story is told of a great judge, I believe Lord Tenterden, who asked a guest whether he took beef or mutton. The guest replied that he really had no choice. The judge fixed him with his eye, and said severely, “I asked you, Sir, whether you took beef or mutton, and I request to know, without any further prevarication, whether you take the one or the other.” In this way Dr. Blakesley fixed me on the subject of tripe. He repeated the question in a peremptory way.

“To the best of my recollection I have hardly ever tasted it.”

“You will eat tripe, Sir, to vary your beef and mutton, with game or poultry, in much moderation. What do you drink?”

“Oh, tea and coffee; anything that comes in my way.”

“Tea and coffee are bad things for you, as bad as brandy and champagne. Avoid all of them like poison.”

I ventured humbly to say that it was impossible for me to give up my tea. I would rather renounce all other fluids. It was my sheet anchor for the day.

“Very well, Sir. You may take it once a day. Not very much of it, and very weak. Do you take sugar with it?”

“Certainly.”

“You must do nothing of the sort. Sugar is a deadly poison to you. Can you drink whisky?”

I have heard the story of an Irishman to whom Dr. Blakesley put the same enquiry. The Irishman was fairly astonished by it. "Can I drink whisky—drink whisky? can I drink whisky?" he repeated several times. "Just tell me, Doctor dear, *can a duck swim?*"

My own reply was that I could drink it, but I did not at all like the smoky flavour of Scotch whisky.

"Then you may take gin. Take your physiological quantity, which in your case would be two table-spoonsful twice a day well diluted. I suppose you can drink claret."

"I often take claret."

"Well, take a tumbler of water and put as much claret into it as will give a little colour to the water. You will find that very refreshing. You can take some vegetables, no sauces of any kind with them, and always in moderation."

I expressed my gratitude.

"Now with regard to vegetables. There is no objection to your eating any part of the vegetables which is above ground, but do not take any of that which is below the soil. Fasten your mind on that great fundamental distinction. Can you eat cabbages?"

"Yes."

"There is no objection to your indulging in cabbages somewhat freely."

I bethought myself of the Greek proverb, *δὶς κράμβη θάνατος*.*

"You are suffering from a form of suppressed gout. Here is your prescription, and you are to come to see me again this day next week. Your case requires strict watching."

* *i.e.*, Twice of Cabbage is death.

But as I already possessed a choice collection of prescriptions, I did not think it necessary to add to my collection of curios in this respect, and I remembered to forget the appointment.

A curious story is told of this Dr. Blakesley, who for once, and for a very good reason, departed from his rule of simplicity of diet. A man in a bad state of health told the story of his ailments to the apparently sympathizing Doctor.

"You cannot be too careful in what you eat and drink. What you take ought to be of the best," said Blakesley.

This was language with which the sufferer concurred in the most genuine way.

"I can only allow you two meals a day, a first and a second dinner. At the first you will eat nothing but crab, and at the second only *pâte de foie gras*. Come again in a month."

The patient promised obedience. It is perfectly wonderful that in the nineteenth century patients should render such an absolute obedience to their Doctor as they would not render to lawyer or parson. This extraordinary diet was persevered in, and with the happiest results. At the end of the month the patient was greatly improved.

"The fact of the matter is," the Doctor drily explained, "that, like a very large proportion of the human race, you eat a great deal too much. *Pâte de foie gras* and crab are very good things, but I defy any human being to eat very much of them day after day. My simple object was to cut down your food, and the abstinence has done you good."

One day I was sitting in a well-known restaurant at

Brighton, and a man who followed me in called for *pâte de foie gras* and champagne. Perhaps he was ashamed of indulging himself in such luxuries, but he turned round to me in an apologetic way and said,

“The Doctors order me these things for a liver complaint.”

“Really, Sir,” I answered, “I have not the slightest interest in what the Doctors order you. But judging by the lights of nature this would not be the best diet for a liver complaint.”

Perhaps he had consulted the very same Doctor, who with some deep design had given him what seemed to me very doubtful advice.

Then there is another way of consulting Specialists, the most expensive and elaborate. This is when you bring down a consulting physician from London to the provinces. This is almost as expensive as when you bring down a Queen's Counsel from Westminster to do circuit business. The arrangement in the old posting days was that the fee should be at the rate of a guinea a mile. It frequently happens that this is still the case, especially when Doctors are called into the suburbs of town. Within the radius of twelve miles there is a charge of twelve guineas. When once a Doctor is in a railway carriage it would be absurd and unjust to charge an extra guinea for every mile on which he is so rapidly and easily carried. A fee of thirty-five guineas is sometimes charged on going from London to Brighton, but twenty-five is in all conscience enough. A hundred pounds is often paid by a wealthy Yorkshireman for bringing his Doctor down that distance. A London Doctor will shake his head and say that the long journeys do not pay him; that he loses more than he

gets by being away from his London practice. My own experience is that they are very glad to get these big fees, and I very seldom hear of their being declined.

Yet I have a strong suspicion that for the most part they are unnecessary. The Doctor is often sent for when it is really too late to be of use. It is a satisfaction for friends to know that everything has been tried, that not a stone has been left unturned. If the patient is a very rich man the amount of the fee is nothing to him if even an infinitesimal amount of good can be done.

A Doctor was telling me one day that he had been called into Yorkshire to a case, and had received a fee of eighty pounds. "And what did you do for the money?" I asked. "Well, the fact is that everything possible had been done for him, and things had come to the last. However, I was able to suggest a water-pillow." If a water-pillow gave the poor moribund patient relief, the money was not thrown away; but it seems a great deal of money for the hint. Our Doctors have no sympathy with the pernicious modern doctrine of paying by results.

However, it is quite possible that unless an arrangement has been made, the Doctor may not come off so well. One raw evening I met Sir William at a little railway station some forty miles from town. He was in a state of considerable disgust. "I have had to drive twenty miles each way, to and fro, from this station to Bibbborough Park. Such bad roads, such slow horses; not the least good—all up with the poor man. And, O my friend, such a miserable fee, such a miserable fee. I am ill and tired myself, and shall get no dinner to-night till ten o'clock." The business

part of the visit ought to have been arranged beforehand, as no physician would endeavour, under the circumstances, to recover a higher payment.

In former days there was another way of consultation. Physicians used to meet apothecaries at a coffee house, and write prescriptions for them without ever seeing the patient. This was the case with such illustrious physicians as Radcliff and Mead. Such men used to have a morning and an evening coffee house where they met the apothecaries, who paid them half-a-guinea a case. It cannot be said that the custom of prescribing without seeing the patient is altogether extinct, although such prescriptions do not go through a medical intermediary.

There are still people who write to Doctors about their cases without personally consulting them, but of course no Doctor will venture on heroic remedies without a personal examination of the patient. Still there are periodicals, one or more, which give answers to patients who write to enquire, but the answers they receive are extremely safe, and may do a little good, and probably very little harm.

No physician has, as yet, been ennobled. A baronetcy is the *ne plus ultra* of honour. The French have had their surgical barons, like Larrey and Nelaton, and why should not we? It is interesting to know that a great judge, Henry Bickersteth, Lord Longdale, the Master of the Rolls, was a practising surgeon before he was called to the bar, and became one of its prominent ornaments. He married a lady of rank, to whose father he had been travelling physician. One Dr. Smithson married the only daughter and heiress of the Somersets, and was created Duke of Northumberland. The anti-

Jacobins laughed at him for being a Smithson and not a Percy. It would not be a bad idea to elevate to a life-peerage any President of the College of Physicians when he may have retired from active practice.

Many illustrious authors have been Doctors. Such were Arbuthnot, Akenside, Darwin, Grainger. The illustrious Larke was one; the delightful Goldsmith was one; the illustrious Crabbe was one—he was known as Surgeon Crabbe, though as a matter of fact he had never walked the hospitals. But before the year 1816 we are told that the law required no proofs of learning in a medical education if only a man could shew that he had passed an apprenticeship. Crabbe has some terrible lines on a country Doctor's work among the poor :—

“Anon a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bluster and conceit,
With looks unaltered by these scenes of woe,
With speed that entering speaks his haste to go ;
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
And carries fates and physic in his eye ;
A potent quack, long versed in human ills,
Who first insults the victim whom he kills.
Whose murd'rous hands a drowsy head protect,
And whose most tender mercy is neglect ;
Paid by the parish for attendance here,
He wears contempt upon his sapient sneer ;
In haste he seeks the bed where misery lies,
Impatience marked in his averted eyes ;
And some habitual queries hurried o'er
Without reply, he rushes to the door ;
His drooping patient, long inured to pain
And long unheeded, knows remonstrance vain ;
He ceases now the feeble help to crave
Of man, and mutely hastens to the grave.”

Babbage says, "Some of the most valuable names which adorn the history of English science have been connected with the medical profession."

And in connection with these words consider the inscription in a country churchyard on one of the greatest surgeons and writers :—

"Sacred to the memory of Sir Charles Bell, who after unfolding with unrivalled sagacity, patience, and success, the wonderful structure of our mortal bodies, esteemed lightly of his greatest discoveries, except only as they tended to impress himself and others with a deeper sense of the infinite wisdom and ineffable goodness of the Almighty Creator."

CHAPTER IV.

ROSANNA SQUILLS—MY LADY DOCTOR.

IN these days of Women's Suffrage, Women's Colleges, Women's Cricket Clubs, Women's Rights (of leaving their husbands), Women's Wrongs, Women's Anything-you-please, such a book as mine would be incomplete (I suppose) without some reference to "that last infirmity of noble minds"—the Lady Doctor. What we used to call "the fair sex" is rapidly becoming the superior sex in a manner which causes the average bachelor to shudder. The masculine sex, however, may comfort itself with the reflection that a few things are still the uninvaded property of its particular domain. There are no Lady Jockeys—yet; no Lady Bruisers—the fancy pets of the pugilist ring; no Lady Magis-

trates—if you except those who are known by the playful title of “old women ;” no Lady Street-sweepers, and no Lady Cab-drivers.

But the Lady Doctor is a fact which can be no longer ignored ; and, amongst my many experiences, it was my fortune to make the acquaintance of Dr. Rosanna Squills.

I had retired to a quiet seaside place on the coast of Wales in company with an aggravated attack of intercostal neuralgia—one of the most abhorrent of human maladies. Occasionally, I joined the steamer which plies between Beaumaris and Liverpool ; one of the stopping stations being Llandudno. It was here that I met some lady friends of mine who had been under Dr. Rosanna’s treatment ; and she had done them a great deal of good.

She was favourably known as the translator of a German medical work, and was intimately acquainted with the methods of a new system which was coming into great repute on the Continent. Her strong point was considered to be the very trouble of which I was the chronic victim. Serious exhortations were made to me, and at last it was arranged that I should make a call.

Now, between ourselves, I do not see any reason why women should not attend women—if women will put such trust in their own sex—and also children. But in my humble judgment they are not best adapted for the functions of general practitioner, and may be embarrassing to the coarser and unworthy sex.

But I was strongly tempted to make the experiment. I considered within myself that with my ocean of experience I could take things quite coolly, and that blushing was a vanished faculty.

I found Dr. Rosanna at home. The room in which she received me was a compound of study, surgery, and consulting room. Many learned treatises on physiology reposed upon the book-shelves; miniature busts of medical celebrities occupied points of vantage on the walls. The room was plainly yet daintily furnished; one feminine weakness alone was apparent in the profusion of roses which were placed, in china bowls, about the apartment.

But my present medical adviser was certainly very nice, clever and sympathetic, and with a good deal of tact. I felt a comparative Yahoo in her presence.

And yet my first interview with her was not a success. We got on very well for a few moments, until at last she entreated me to speak to her with the utmost unreserve. Unfortunately there still remained a stock of shyness in me on which I had not counted. When she became very pressing and personal on the subject of my internal arrangements I got very hot and uncomfortable, and putting down my fee I rushed off to my cab, which was fortunately in waiting outside.

A few days afterwards I received an invitation to spend the day with my friends at Llandudno. I went, little expecting the trap which they had set for me. During the time now consecrated to that fixed festival—"afternoon tea"—I was not a little disconcerted to see Dr. Rosanna walk into the room. After a few commonplace greetings my friends withdrew, and Dr. Rosanna and I were left alone. It was she who began the conversation.

"You bolted off rather suddenly the other day?"

"Ye-e-es," I stammered.

"Why?"

“ I don’t know. I am very nervous and unstrung. In fact, I have been in the habit of consulting—you see—only members of—of my own sex.”

“ And you naturally put no faith in—what I believe is termed—the weaker sex ? ”

I glanced at the door. There was no escape. Dr. Rosanna had skilfully placed her chair between me and the portal. All retreat was cut off this time.

“ Come, come ! ” she said, with a ring of authority in her voice ; “ don’t be foolish, but just tell me what is the matter.”

I began to explain. “ I am suffering from intercostal neuralgia ; my appetite is completely gone ; I can’t sleep ; all day long I am a walking mass of discomfort.”

“ You know, then, the nature of your disorder ? ”

“ Yes ; oh yes ! ”

“ Have you been reading any medical books or journals lately ? ”

“ Yes ; several.”

“ I thought so. Tell your men-Doctors, when you get back, that you are suffering from a form of *gastritis* which may become complicated. Say that a Woman told you so. Also, recommend them to try an electric battery for the intercostal neuralgia. It will disappear in three minutes and attack you, twenty-four hours afterwards, worse than ever. Then let them apply the battery treatment again, and you will have no further trouble. To escape it in future, never sleep with your window open ; avoid crowded rooms ; be careful not to get wet. Here is the fee you left in my room the other day. Good afternoon.”

As I had never had prescriptive advice fired at my head in this manner before, I sat staring at the door

long after the fair physician had left nothing but a departing skirt for memory. I was absolutely bewildered. Most of us may lay claim to being "here to-day and gone to-morrow;" but Dr. Rosanna was here one moment and gone the next. It was a five-act play in a flash; but it lacked incident. There was no introductory prelude—to speak of; no leading up to things; no plot; no "gag"; no unmasking of villainy; no benediction of the virtuous.

Rumination at last convinced me that I had hardly treated this lady in a way which would satisfy the immortal "Cocker." (By-the-way, who *was* Cocker?) Dr. Rosanna must regard me, evidently, as a hopeless idiot. Had one ever heard before of a patient who had sought advice, and then fled from the medical presence without waiting for it? Her short and sharp method, in this second interview, must be traceable to the fact that my friends and I were an intolerable nuisance to her. Obviously things must not be suffered to remain as they were. I would make an appointment with Dr. Rosanna; subject myself wholly to her mercies; crave her pardon for being so brusque and stupid, and persistently carry out her suggestions—or commands.

This resolution brought about a third interview with Dr. Rosanna. This time I was not at all disconcerted by the brass plate on the front door; nor by the champion tennis-racquet which hung in the hall; nor by the natty little Abigail who asked my name and business; nor by the awfully professional fact of Dr. Rosanna herself.

I had prepared a very neat little speech, as I came along, by way of apology. This I had intended to introduce craftily after the customary and conventional

how-d'ye-do. But it did not come off. Dr. Rosanna, after consulting my visiting card—as one who desires to become acquainted with the name of an intrusive visitor—promptly came to the point by the suggestive formula—

“ You have called to consult me ? ”

Evidently she intended to ignore our previous interviews. The insinuating grace of the inquiry completely upset me. She came to my rescue.

“ You appear to be in tolerably good health, Sir ; what is the matter ? ”

I explained, in a hesitating and nervous manner, that I didn't quite know.

“ Ah ! ” said she. “ Be good enough to remove your coat, and let me examine your chest.”

Chest ? Examine my chest ? Appear before a member of the opposite sex in my shirt-sleeves ? Good Lord ! What next !

But Dr. Rosanna had begun to look for a stethoscope, and she now produced it. It was a truly appalling instrument. It was fitted with two acoustic valves which she placed upon her ears, the stethoscope itself being attached thereto by tubes. The effect was to ornament her with an elephantine trunk. Over this proboscis she regarded me with mute complacency until I was ready for examination.

She proceeded with her auscultation ; told me to take a deep inspiration—to hold my breath—to let it go—to cough—to speak ; I feeling all the time like a helpless booby acting, for the amusement of a supposed audience, under the spell of mesmerism.

“ H'm,” she said at last ; “ that will do. Mis-ter-a-what'syourname, I have failed to detect anything

wrong. Your heart is sound, and your lungs are going splendidly. You are a trifle flat about the left side of the chest, and you look half starved. Don't they give you enough to eat?"

"Who?" said I.

"Well; your womenkind; the people who look after you."

"I haven't anybody to look after me."

"The more stupid you. Haven't you even a house-keeper?"

"No; I spend most of my time at the Club—or in travelling."

"Well, you might do worse; but you need a good deal of feeding-up."

I ventured to submit that my Doctors, hitherto, had knocked off many elements in my diet; and prescribed homœopathic morsels of meat and drink.

"Yes," replied Dr. Rosanna, "and if they had ordered you to swathe yourself from head to foot in cotton wool and flannel, you would have been—pardon me—fool enough to do it. Eh?"

"Yes; I believe I should have been the—the—that sort of person. But I think you mentioned, the other day, something about *gastritis*?"

"Did I? *Gastritis* and indigestion are first cousins. Indigestion may be induced by want of food quite as much as by a plethora of food. The thing is to keep the happy medium."

"And that medium is to be attained ——?"

"By eating and drinking as much as will *nearly* satisfy hunger and thirst. That recipe alone ought to build me a statue in every market-place in England."

"I am grateful to you for the valuable information. Now about a prescription."

"Prescription? What prescription? What does a fine healthy man like you want with a prescription? Of course I will give you a bottle of medicine if you like; but if you take my advice you will empty it down the first grating you meet with in the street. Shall I tell you frankly what is the matter with you?"

"I wish you would."

"I may speak plainly?"

"Oh of course; certainly."

"You are simply being coddled to death. Nine-tenths of the maladies in this country are due to coddling. I myself was coddled, as a girl, until I was nearly coddled into consumption. But I would have no more of it. I tried hard work instead, and it was the saving of me. Take my advice, and use the limbs God has given you. Set up a hunter or two, and work them well. Buy a gun, and wake up the rabbits. Try lawn-tennis, cricket, football—anything that will bring your muscles into active play. Life will be a pleasure to you instead of a pain, and you may bid good-bye to all the consulting physicians in London."

"You mean, then, that I need more recreation?"

"No; I mean that you are abominably idle. Try a good dose of hard work. See what it has done for *me*."

I did see. Dr. Rosanna was a perfect type of good health, good spirits, vigour, elasticity, and—if the twinkle in her eyes went for anything—of good humour with plenty of wit to back it. So impressed was I with this catalogue of qualities, that if I had not been a confirmed bachelor—well; I don't know.

I prolonged that interview until Dr. Rosanna began

to glance longingly at her writing-table. The fact is, I could not for the life of me hit upon a plan for referring to the medical fee. I had concluded to send it to her in a cheque by post, when she said—

“There is nothing more, I think?”

“No,” said I, “except the—a—er—the pecuniary fine for taking up so much of your time.”

“Oh! thanks! I don’t require any fee from you. Your friends asked me to look you over. I thought, perhaps, that your case might add something to my experience; but I find that all men are very much alike. *Good morning.*”

But I could not allow the interview to come to a conclusion in this fashion. I begged Dr. Rosanna to allow me to offer her some little equivalent for her honest advice, with such persuasive eloquence, that at last she said—

“Then I’ll tell you what you shall do. I suppose you were never brought up to any trade?”

“No; oh dear no.”

“That is a pity; because then I could have asked you to make me something. Have you at all a literary turn?”

I thought that if I possessed any gift—however elementary—it might probably lie in a literary direction. And I said so.

“Very well, then,” she replied. “Begin to-day, and write a book. I will accept the first published copy of it as a fee.”

In a rash moment I promised to do so; utterly innocent of the wide chasm which separates a manuscript from its dignified dress of printed type. But I succeeded at last. Wherefore these pages are a path-

etic—not to say pathological—testimony to the manner in which I paid that fee. Indeed I am not at all sure that the title of this book ought not to be *Dr. Rosanna's Prescription*.

Whether or not I carried out the rest of her advice matters not. I am rather too old for cricket, and too little in love with black eyes and broken limbs to care much for football. But I may say that I often watch a game of tennis from the sheltered corner of a pavilion; and that I have gone so far as to “field” a few balls which have strayed, from time to time, beyond their legitimate boundaries.

Nevertheless, when the Summer evening is fair and the daylight holds, a curious eye may detect upon a certain “green” the manly figures of four members of our sex. Each, in his turn, kneels with one knee upon the green sward with a spherical lump of wood in his hand, while a yearning gaze of intensest interest is fixed upon a distant object. That object is “the Jack.” When each of these figures has knelt in turn, and contorted the various members of his person into a complication of writhing knots—this being the most approved method of influencing the direction of the missile after it has left the hand—the quartette walks soberly and thoughtfully towards the beloved “Jack.” A solemn deliberation follows thereafter, the result of which is expressed in the mystic terms “two in.” This process is repeated for some hours; and one of the figures belongs to the humble author of “My Doctors.”

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR.

THE Country Doctor! What a vision of rural delights is conjured up by that fascinating title! Of breezy moors and sheltered dingles; of copse and meadow and prattling trout-stream! Of rides and drives through rustic scenes where are hedgerows redolent of honeysuckle, violets, sweet-briar and the fragrance of moss! Yes; it is a very pretty picture; but, reverse the lights, and you will have more of the reality. Even in the country it is not always Spring—nor even Summer or Autumn. There is such a thing as Weather, and the East wind, “good”—as the rustics say—“for neither man nor beast” is not wholly unknown.

Now these country practitioners are called upon to travel over an immense amount of ground; and their lines, amongst the bucolics, are not always cast in pleasant places. To be compelled to ride or drive a dozen miles on a Winter night in a howling wind is not pleasant for anyone whether young or old. It is not satisfactory, either, to find a patient, whose case was reported to require urgency, sitting up in normal condition and partaking copiously of hot brandy and water. It is adding insult to injury to tell the Doctor that hot brandy and water is far better medicine than any which he could supply.

Under such circumstances, the medical mind would probably be greatly satisfied by a copious bleeding of

the patient on the spot. One may, however, safely assume that this operation is deferred until the time comes for sending in the Christmas bills.

A distinction has sometimes been drawn between Town Doctors and Country Doctors, as if the latter belonged to a totally different and subordinate stratum of medical life. Comparing the two classes in the gross, the advantage probably rests with Metropolitan physicians, but by no means to the extent that some people suppose. There are very many able men in the country who, if they had had the opportunity, might have rivalled the most distinguished physicians in London. But their lot has been cast otherwise. They have preferred the country to the town. They have bought or inherited a practice. They have not had the capital or the connection that would have given them a real chance. So they keep to their groove in the provinces, and Sir Henry Taylor's fit line, "the world knows nothing of its greatest men," might suit them perfectly.

Several of these Doctors who have made a great reputation in pathology, have been assured by their medical brethren that if they came to London they would be certain of brilliant success, but they have greatly preferred to stay in the country. The mass of Doctors are of course Country Doctors, and you may find among them some of the ablest men of the profession.

Some of the best Town Doctors that have ever lived have been recruited from the country. I know a little village on the Clyde, near Greenoch, called Inverkirke, where, in early life, Sir James Simpson sought the office of Parish Surgeon. "When not selected," he wrote

long afterwards, "I felt perhaps a deeper amount of chagrin and disappointment than I have ever experienced since that date. If chosen, I should probably have been working there as a village Doctor still."

Some of the greatest discoveries have been made down in the country almost by accident. Dr. Jenner, of Berkeley, noticed the different diseases which attacked milkers who handled diseased cows and the immunity from small-pox of those who had once had cow-pox. Hence came all the benefits of vaccination, in spite of the infinitesimal minority of idiots who seem to object to the saving of human life.

In a little sea-side cottage in Scotland, it was noticed that the fisher-folk found various uses for the liver of the codfish, and from this circumstance came cod-liver oil, so often the sheet-anchor of the consumptive.

Having said so much in favour of Country Doctors, I must reluctantly admit that they have, like ourselves, their weak points. As you will find amongst them some of the brightest lights of the profession, so you will also find the greatest number of unfavourable specimens; people who go in a groove, people of limited knowledge and experience. If you know country society well you may study Doctors in almost every variety.

For instance, there is a great deal of jealousy among them—not, perhaps, limited to the provinces—which is not a professional fault so much as a radical defect in human nature itself. One result of this is a peculiarly rigorous system of etiquette. It is the easiest thing in the world to tread upon professional corns and to raise an outcry. The ugliest word that one medical man can use respecting another is to say

that his conduct is *unprofessional*. It is the hardest thing in the world to change your Doctor without causing offence.

The Doctors are occasionally given to cultivating a somewhat sly and supercilious way of speaking of one another—again a fault of Madre Nature herself. Here are a sample or two of the kind of remarks that I mean—"I get my drugs from Bell's, in Oxford Street; I have not the least idea in the world where Dr. Jones gets his from." "What a lovely Churchyard you have, and how nicely Dr. Jones is filling it up for you." Of course this is equivalent to saying—"Jones is all very well in his way; but he is not a patch upon me. If you set him up, as your medical man, instead of me, don't be surprised if you find an early grave."

But I think the chief failing amongst Country Doctors lies in the fact that the large majority of them are, to begin with, no more than medical students. They come straight from the London or Scotch Universities armed with free leave and licence to kill, slay, and destroy.

Of course I know that the medical student of the day is very different to him of Mr. Pickwick's date, although it is a mistake to suppose that Mr. Benjamin Allen has left no representatives of his class behind him. He is now overtaught instead of undertaught. Examiners in medicine have told me that the young fellows have now to take up subjects which will be of no possible use to them during the whole of their professional lifetime.

Now Carlyle tells us how he went to consult a Doctor under his terrible affliction of chronic dyspepsia, and

his conclusion was that if he had poured his sorrows into the hairy ear of the first jackass he met, it would have equally answered his purpose.

So, with all my sympathy for youth, I am afraid that I must say something hard of the younger men. I am always glad to hear of a medical student, a Sawbones in training, being plucked. This sounds inhuman, but I will explain my meaning. I am not so much thinking of the embryo doctor as of his patients in the future.

Now in this age of cram a faculty for getting up subjects is created, which is only equalled by the faculty for forgetting them. A man who has crammed victoriously for his examination is liable to forget his cram when his purpose is obtained. A literary man is called on to review a book relating to a subject of which he knows absolutely nothing. He goes to the British Museum and "gets it up," and his review gives you the idea that he is the man who has been thinking and dreaming of nothing else for the whole of his life. If you ask him about the subject a few years later, he will know next to nothing about it. A public writer being asked for some information replied, "You will find all you want to know in such and such articles of mine, but I really know nothing about the subject now." Similarly a barrister will get up a case laboriously, and then be glad to get it off his mind and dismissed into limbo. Now a clever medical student who will get up his book knowledge skilfully, may not be the man to retain and to use that knowledge. It may escape him. He will know far less after he is a Doctor than he did before. There must be the persistent tests to know whether he really is a master of his craft, and has fully given his mind to it; not only that he possesses

the knowledge, but that the knowledge also possesses him. It is sad that a young fellow should be plucked, but it is still more sad that vital interests should be trusted to incompetent heads. It is in country practice that we see most instances of this kind.

Again; it is much to be feared that in the cases where the Country Doctor is also the Parish Doctor, the Poor are fobbed off with the minimum amount of consideration. The Parish Doctor is paid a certain income to look after the ailments of those who are in receipt of outdoor relief from that tender-hearted body "the Guardians of the Poor." As the stipend is never very large, Poor people must wait until the Doctor has time to attend to them. In most instances, a single visit suffices, together with a bottle of medicine; and that is all. Of course I may be told that the Doctor naturally visits those who will pay him—and, by preference, those who will pay him well. I am not prepared to admit that there is anything "natural" about it; but I think that no man should undertake an office unless he is prepared to carry out its full responsibilities.

Herein lies the difference between a really good physician and a fourth-rate man. I have known of a Country Doctor who had gone many miles to visit a case, and he had gone many miles back on his way home when it suddenly occurred to him that there was a question which he had omitted to ask, and on which some important directions might depend. He turned the horses back again towards the place which he had left, and had at least the satisfaction of knowing that he had made his work thorough and complete. The other man's work will be shoddy of its kind. I have known repeated instances of Doctors who in their

examination of a case have allowed important points to escape them possibly through sheer forgetfulness, possibly through weariness of the flesh ; and the patient has gone away with Bright's or Addison's disease, while the Doctor has never detected it.

Yet, on the other hand, the bucolics are often very difficult people to manage. They will do what you tell them, but they like their bolus—as they like their beer—very strong. They have no notion of the “expectant” mode of treatment. They like their Doctors to give them a prescription, or rather to fill their bottles with his compounds. The bigger the bottles the better they are satisfied. If the Doctor drops some very big words, which he is not unwilling to do if he thinks it will have a good effect, they are immensely gratified. They render it into phrases of their own, and in some parts bronchitis is frequently called browntitis, just as jaundice becomes “Jonas.”

Sometimes the poor fellows come and tell you wistfully that the Doctor says they require plenty of nourishment ; and in a Christian country they ought to have it. It would pay the State well, would prevent pauperism, disease, and death, if we gave the Doctors a free hand in matters of this kind. Sometimes a Doctor might just as well tell them to take a voyage to Australia and back, or to winter at Nice and Cannes, as order them all the good things which the case requires. The Doctor is able to do a certain amount, but this is not enough, and good ladies will administer jellies and beef tea, but this is often done in an uncertain and sporadic manner. In the country, however, as a general rule, the sick and poor are better looked after than in the great towns.

The poor like to take home medicines on a Saturday that they may enjoy being ill in a leisurely way on a Sunday, when they may keep their beds instead of getting up to their work. The Sunday illness is by no means limited to the poor. It is, in fact, an indescribable order of illness of which the Doctors ought to take scientific account. What a mysterious illness is this Sunday disorder! It shows its first symptoms the last thing. It appears in its severest form a little before Church Service at eleven o'clock. There is a comparative lull about dinner-time, when the sufferer is generally able to make a very fair meal. The symptoms recur when the bells strike up for afternoon or evening Service. The patient generally has a sound night, and is perfectly well on Monday morning.

Of course there are many high points in medicine in which it would be presumptuous for us to form, or at least to express, an opinion. I may have had my suspicions now and then that a radical mistake has been made, and that a patient has been killed and not cured. A physician once made an ominous remark. "It is very convenient for me that my new patients, the Lascelles, live so near my old patients, the Tyrells; *I continue to kill two birds with one stone.*"

In my own experience I have noticed several blunders, which I felt the more acutely as they might have been to my own personal detriment. There are some medicines that come upon a man almost like a thunderbolt. If you give a patient even a slight excess of such drugs as prussic acid or strychnine, the result may be overwhelming. One day a doctor gave me a medicine which came upon me like a streak of lightning. It is not safe to have such sensations a

second time; one is alarmed to think of the possible upshot. I met the Doctor next day, and told him that I had decided not to take any more of the medicine. "Ah, yes," he said, "that was quite right. I thought over the matter last night, and was just on the point of dropping you a note to the effect that you had better leave it off, only something interposed to prevent it."

Now surely this was very bad practice. I was to run the risk of taking a noxious drug, because the Doctor was too indifferent to provide for my interests! He might have manslaughtered me.

"Often have I regretted," wrote a celebrated Irish physician, "that under the present system experience is only to be acquired at a considerable expense of human life. There is, indeed, no concealing the truth, the melancholy truth, that numbers of lives are annually lost in consequence of mistreatment. The victims selected for this sacrifice at the shrine of experience generally belong to the poorer classes of society, and their immolation is never long delayed when a successful candidate for a dispensary commences the discharge of his duty. The rich, however, do not always escape, nor is the possession of wealth in every instance a safeguard against the chances of inexperience."

One important experience in my medical history was that I was advised to put myself under direct medical care for a time, that is to say, to reside in the house of some Doctor who could have me under constant observation and immediate treatment if such should be required.

Now I have the greatest sympathy with young Doctors

—I mean of the proper sort—in their uphill fight. Many of them have a desperate struggle before they get into quiet waters. Sometimes they go out as surgeons on board ship, often pleasant enough, and sometimes involving much labour and privation. It will be remembered that Darwin never recovered from the effect of his five years' cruise in the *Beagle* as ship surgeon. Often they become assistants to prosperous—or unprosperous—general practitioners before they get into business for themselves, and sometimes they never get into business on their own account. Sometimes, as a Doctor once put it to me, “they keep a fool,” and the fool keeps the Doctor, or helps to do so. “The fool” indicates a person of unsound mind. Sometimes this young Doctor may keep half a dozen mental patients, combining with the oversight of them some share of medical practice. Either, however, the general practice will eliminate the moderate patients, or these will kill the practice. The Doctor has ultimately to make his choice and abide by it.

It is a sad thing, again, for a young Doctor when he consents to take a lunatic or a dipsomaniac to reside with him. The domestic felicity comes to a sudden pause. Everything must be subordinated to the care and interests of the patient. Sometimes immense sums are demanded and paid in such cases. I know an instance in which a medical man asked and received a thousand a year in such a case, and it was also arranged that if the patient should die or be withdrawn, that an annuity of eight hundred a year should be paid to the physician.

But there are patients who go to reside with a physician who are neither lunatics nor dipsomaniacs.

A man's case may be of a "sick-list" kind, or he may be highly nervous, which is not uncommon in such cases. He is then glad to have a Doctor close at hand. If such a patient is extremely well off, he may have a Doctor to reside with him. The position is often a very tiresome one for the Doctor. I knew a young fellow who had six hundred a year for such a patient. But he soon had to explain to the patient that he talked such a frightful amount of twaddle that no amount of money could be any compensation for the loss of time and temper.

I know a case in which an old lady had some trouble of the œsophagus; some difficulty in swallowing, aggravated by a nervous condition. She was firmly convinced that some day or other she would be choked; so the Doctor was expected to be closely at hand. He was very handsomely paid, but has quintupled his income since he went into general practice. He demanded, however, that he should have two hours a day, between twelve and two, for himself. As the lady considered that she might choke at any moment, it was necessary that a substitute should be provided for this space of time. A young fellow fresh from his degree was found for the purpose. He told his friends that for the three years in which he attended his patient he never once set eyes upon her. Every day he had a capital lunch, and there was a guinea in tissue paper by the side of his plate. The lady did not choke during the whole of the time, and his services were not required.

I may say here that the wife of a Country Doctor plays a most important part in a Doctor's practice. She holds her husband's constituency together by her social qualities as much as the husband does by his

scientific qualities. This is, of course, very illogical, but it is the course of human nature. If you want your interests pushed you must have your friends, and if you would have friends you must entertain and be entertained. All this is the domain of the wife. Where the wife is really interesting and nice she invokes enthusiasm, and her friends are resolved to do their best for her. Hospitality in these days is, unfortunately, very much a matter of calculation, and a Doctor's wife in these hard times so frames her calls and invitations as to maintain and extend the area of her husband's practice.

Just as there are clergywomen and political women, so also there are medical women. I know a lady who was daughter, niece, and granddaughter of Doctors. She would treat an ordinary case quite as well as her husband. She dispensed medicines extremely well, and saved her husband the heavy expenses of an assistant. He was Parish Doctor, and the parish poor often preferred the wife to the husband. "Oh, never mind about the Doctor," they would say. "We wants to see the missus. 'Tis the missus's stuff that we like. She always does us good." They would swallow with unmingled faith any bolus she would give, and in fact she would make more than an average good lady Doctor.

The general habit of the Country Doctor was to send in a bill for attendance, containing detailed items of so many visits and so much medicine, with the specific charges for both. Now they mention a lump sum without going into details. Sometimes in families of narrow means, where the conflict for existence is a sore one, a Doctor's visits occasionally become a source of positive

terror. I have known of ladies, who when they have seen the Doctor come to the front door have slipped out at the back of the house, hoping thus to evade the visit and avoid expense. I question whether the evasion has saved them anything when the time for sending a bill has arrived. If a man is naturally hard and grasping all the traditions of a noble profession will leave him very much as he is by nature.

Doctors are very generous, and even at times indiscriminate in their generosity. Some of them will never take fees from a parson or a professional singer. I know of another Doctor who has a strong feeling in the matter of widows, and will never take a fee from one. Now parsons, professional people, and widows have sometimes a great deal of money, and there is no reason why they should not pay their fees like other people. It is a matter in which no hard and fast line ought to be drawn, but which affords ample room for the discriminating faculty.

I am sorry to say that the converse is not unknown, and that Doctors can occasionally be very grasping. There was a celebrated physician who attended a chronic case of long duration and of a hopeless character. He did not do any good, and no one supposed that he could, but it was a satisfaction to the aged patient to receive the Doctor's visits. A very large sum of money was paid in fees, and then the son suggested that the Doctor should continue his daily visits, but should be paid *en bloc* on the termination of the case. When the demise at last took place, the son and executor sent the Doctor a cheque for six hundred pounds, which he considered a very liberal one. To his surprise, the cheque came back torn in half, with

a curt intimation that a Doctor's fees were in guineas, and not in pounds.

This was bad taste, but in the next instance there was something worse than bad taste. The wife of a professional man became paralyzed. The Doctor attended, but could do no good. He came in a most unnecessary manner day by day. It was obviously a case in which nothing could be done, and his visits were thoroughly unneeded and unasked for. The clergyman—for such was his position—ought to have explained this to the Doctor, but he was deficient in moral courage, and did not want to hurt the Doctor's feelings. The Doctor had small remorse about hurting the parson's feelings. At the end of the year he sent him in a bill for about a hundred pounds. The patient's husband remonstrated, and pointed out that his wife had not received, and could not possibly have received, any good from his visits. The Doctor did not deny this for a moment, but said brusquely, "Well, if you wish to plead poverty, I will knock off a five-pound note from my claim." Then the clergyman gathered up some spirit, and said, "I do not intend to plead poverty, for I am quite able to pay your bill. Here is your cheque, but please do not come any more."

The story is told of John Bell, the great Edinburgh surgeon, that a rich Lanarkshire laird gave him a cheque for fifty pounds, when he considered that his services were entitled to a much higher remuneration. He left the laird, and on reaching the outer door of his mansion Bell met the butler, and said to him, "You have had considerable trouble in opening the door to me; there is a trifle for you," and handed him his master's cheque. The butler was very much astonished, and told the

laird about it, who had the good sense to take the hint, and sent Bell a cheque for a hundred and fifty.

I suppose that never yet was any fee given where change was demanded. An American once handed a Doctor in Paris a bill for five hundred francs in return for a prescription, expecting to receive nineteen-twentieths of it back as change. The Doctor quietly slipped the note into his waistcoat pocket, and made no sign. The American quickly concluded that he had seen the last of that note, and went away a sadder and a wiser man.

All sorts of things are said of the carelessness of Doctors. The great Cullen used to put sums of money into an open drawer, whither he and his wife used to resort when they wanted any. It will be remembered that the parents of Alexander Pope, the poet, put away twenty thousand pounds in a box, which was the bank containing all their possessions. Sir James Simpson used to stuff his receipts into his pockets, and did not know what he had got until he emptied them at night. One stormy night, when a window was rattling, he tightened the frame with an old bit of paper in his pocket, which turned out to be a ten-pound note.

The Country Doctor who is thoroughly successful after the buffetings of fortune sails over quiet seas into a safe harbour. He becomes a great landmark of his time. Like the family lawyer, he is a depository of many confidences. He knows the history of individuals and the history of families on every side. He is just the kind of man whom the Rector loves to have for his Churchwarden, though his professional associations render his attendance at Divine Service very problematical. He has established a character

for shrewdness and benevolence, which is known through all the countryside. There is no one whose larder is better stocked at Christmas with presents of fish and game from friends and neighbours. When he retires on well-earned savings augmented, perhaps, by legacies from grateful patients, he is just the kind of man to be elected a member of the County Council, or be put into the commission of the peace.

Your Doctor with an immense provincial reputation is not one who is behind his metropolitan brethren in social astuteness. He knows how to take advantage of all the peculiarities of the ground which he occupies. "Oh, my Doctor is only too delightful," said a bishop's wife to me. "He is full of sympathy and kindness. He understands me perfectly. I went to see him the other day, and he was so kind and sympathetic!" "My dear Madam," he said, "I see at once, without your telling me, that your system has been severely tried. I am afraid that some of your servants, those plagues of human life, have caused you trouble, or that your worthy husband in the midst of his engagements has hardly been so thoughtful and careful of you as he ought to have been. Now, before we have any private talk, I insist upon your having a little lunch. My first prescription will be a cutlet, and a small pint bottle of Persian with toast." Of course he is voted a charming Doctor, and he really is so, and is none the worse because he studies the weaknesses of human nature and human character as well as physical ailments.

What a wonderful example to all provincial Doctors is that of Sir Thomas Brown, the Norwich philosopher; what cheerful piety, what serene wit! "My life," he said, "is not simply a life, but a miracle of so many

years' duration." His medical science is blended with a love of all learning and all humanity. There is nothing provincial in such Country Doctors, but the broadest principles of philanthropy and learning.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GLOBULAR CULT—THE HOMŒOPATH.

IT will be readily understood that, in my various experiences, homœopathy has from time to time come in my way. I must candidly confess, however, that I do not take kindly to pilules and globules; and this confession may expose what I have to say to a certain amount of distrust and suspicion. I wish, however, to be perfectly fair in the matter. Possibly, many a man in my position would embrace the homœopathistic theory; I am willing to admit that my failure to do so is referable to some incurable defect in my mental organization. I believe my mind to be a perfect chaos on the subject. I have not made it up, and am not likely to make it up; as a result, I adhere to the old lines.

And yet I have enjoyed the acquaintance of several homœopathic Doctors; one of them, with a widely-known reputation, has been a life-long friend. I firmly believe in him, and would trust him with anything—except the interior of my stomach. He and his order are, no doubt, high-minded and honourable men; like other medical men, they have qualified for their profession, and by the law and opinion of the land are

entitled to practise any treatment they choose. But, so far as I am concerned, they may practise on those who are content to accept their nostrums; because I do not see where the principle is to end.

For instance. I should not care to indulge in homœopathic doses of sleep; or to be rigidly confined to a homœopathic dose of dinner: when you come to a homœopathic bottle of wine, the idea is ridiculous. You might as well empty a large barrel of medicine into the Atlantic Ocean, and take a teaspoonful of the mixture three times a day. No; I am not joking; far from it. Hahnemann went to the extent of saying that, in the case of some of his medicines, it would suffice if the patient *looked* at them or *smelt*! I daresay he was quite right. You might stand at John o' Groat's and sniff at a pilule deposited on the extremest crag of Land's End. It might have its effect; but I doubt it. One of these days, I intend to ask a homœopathic Doctor how he would like to be paid for a smell at his medicines by the jingling of coin in the pocket.

Still, I must say that there are one or two things about this system which strike one with admiration. Homœopathic Doctors are most careful on all matters of diet, and the rule of life they prescribe is most helpful and wholesome. For instance; the making of homœopathic soup is simplicity itself. You fill a cauldron with pure spring water, drop into it a pinch of herb dust, and place it on the kitchen fire. When the water gets to simmering point, you obtain the services of a cock-chicken, and walk him up and down in the adjoining scullery for twenty minutes. The soup is then ready, and you may take as much as two tablespoonsful without fear of the consequences.

Again, their pharmacopœia is much larger and more varied than that of the Allopaths. I have known patients to consult them who have been suffering from inflammation of the lungs, or high fevers; and I have been simply aghast to know that such serious maladies should be treated with infinitesimal doses. But somehow, whether by luck or accident, these patients made good recoveries, and went on their way rejoicing. I can cite an instance, in my own experience, of the wonderful way in which the thing sometimes works.

I put myself on a certain occasion into the hands of a homœopathic physician. He was very kindly and sympathetic, gave a clear account of my case, and I was able to verify the accuracy of what he said and predicted. I took his medicines both in globules and pilules, at the same time without the slightest faith in their efficacy. I received, however, a striking proof that they were not without efficacy. I met my friendly homœopathist some three months after, and he asked me how I was getting on. I told him that I had a singular sensation which caused me some disquiet, a burning glow in the palm of my hand. "You are still taking the medicine I prescribed?" "Yes." "I see," he said. "The arsenic is too much for you. You must leave it off for a time." Accordingly I left it off, and the sensation I complained of quite disappeared. Yet the solution was, in fact, very weak. The invention of massage is, I believe, due to the homœopathist, and in many cases has proved one of the greatest blessings.

Many of those who profess homœopathy seem to hold it in a very tentative and uncertain way. Thus, one lady tells me that she will give it to children but

not to adults. Another tells me that she will give it for some slight ailment, but that in any serious case she would go to an orthodox practitioner. Another says that she finds it very good for her terrier, and literally throws physic to the dogs.

But the really essential charm of homœopathy is this; that every convert thereto becomes *ipso facto* a homœopathic Doctor. The disciple becomes the Master, and straightway invests in one of those dainty little medicine chests which contain an array of fancy bottles—quite pretty enough to look at, or even to smell at. There ensues a high old time for the personal friends of that convert. Do you suffer from *insomnia*? three pilules of *ignatia*, to be sucked into nothing as soon as your head is upon your pillow. Are you troubled with indigestion? three pilules of *nux vomica* or *pulsatilla*. Do you feel all-overish without any specific symptom? Select three pilules from each of any given dozen of bottles: mingle them together, and take three promiscuously after retiring for the night. The chances are that some may do you good; none will do you harm.

Of course this is travesty? Not a bit of it. Listen to the words of the learned Dr. Ruddock—

“A story has often been told of a child’s swallowing the contents of a tube of globules, which created great alarm but took ‘no effect.’ Supposing the statement true, it does not at all compromise Homœopathy. Homœopathic medicines, in the form in which they are usually administered, are prepared with the view of acting on the constitution *in disease*. . . . A healthy constitution has no susceptibility for attenuated drugs.” Wherefore, if any man desires to know whether he be in good health or not, let him swallow a tube of globules.

Any little homœopathic housewife will show him how to do it.

Hydropathic treatment, again, is not unknown in the pilular cult. Many are the hypochondriac individuals who have adopted this treatment. Cheerfully will they submit to have a sheet, wrung out in cold water, wrapped about their persons, and to be trussed up—mummy-wise—in an outer covering of mackintosh. Faithfully will they toss off their pint of hot water, morning and night, and believe in the efficacy of it. Let them. I will undertake to follow their example—if I may have the whisky-bottle hard by. As for the daily breakfast of porridge—

There is a story told of a certain London masher whose medical man considered that his patient (and the Metropolis) would be all the better for a few weeks' absence from home. Accordingly, he sent him to a hydropathic establishment not a hundred miles from Southport. The invalid arrived, and retired to rest disgusted and forlorn; because there were no drinks. On the following morning, when he arrived at the breakfast table, all the chairs were occupied except his own; and before it was placed a large plateful of porridge. The patient fumbled for his eyeglass; fixed it in position; surveyed the tempting morsel, and ejaculated "Wait-aw!" The waiter presented himself. "Look he-aw!" said the young man; "who's done this? Take it away, please!"

But after all that can be said, the heresy, if it be a heresy, is very widely spread all through Christendom, and embraced by multitudes of the wisest and best people in the world. Every chemist now has his store of homœopathic remedies. The root principle, *similia*

similibus curantur, has the advantage of great neatness and compactness, and is capable of infinite illustration. It would seem that this is really the principle on which Dr. Koch's treatment is based—a treatment which is not yet generally accepted, and probably never will be. The applications of such a system are infinitely various, and of course are liable at times to be fallacious. For every mood of body or of mind there is a tincture or a powder. If it is a satisfaction for those who are suffering in mind and body to take tinctures and powders, by all means let them do so. They combine with their treatment the further ingredients of faith and hope, and let us believe that some good will come from the mixture.

The practitioners of homœopathy say that they are under some special disadvantages. In the first place they allege that they cure their patients so quickly and so completely that they have no opportunity for the prolonged treatment of the allopathist. In the next place homœopathic practice is so widely scattered, their patients being in such a decided minority as compared with others, that they have to cover much more ground, and spend much more time than the regulars. Hence they consider that their attendance and their medicines should be better paid for, but I do not believe that as a rule their charges have been made higher in consequence.

It is perfectly marvellous how allopathic and homœopathic practitioners have managed to quarrel with each other, supported by their respective kindred and friends. They have accused each other of imbecility and fraud, using language that should be reserved for moral offences. I suppose it is part of poor human

nature. "God forgive you for your theory of the irregular verbs," screamed one ancient grammarian to another. Here are honourable gentlemen, whose impartial wish is to benefit humanity and themselves, violently quarrelling because their tendencies lead them into different directions! There are great watersheds of human thought, some streams wandering northward and others south, some slight accident of declivity determining the direction. Let us believe in the goodness and honesty of both.

And not only so, but, as an outsider, I do not see why the same results should not be obtained by different methods. Nature is not so poor and limited in her provisions that the ends of health may not be attained by different minds working in different ways. I keep a soft spot in my heart for the homœopathic practitioners, because I have known and loved such, though I cannot penetrate to their mystery. I suppose it is true of the Doctor as of the politician—

"Let Whig and Tory vex their blood,
There must be stormy weather,
But for some real result of good
All parties work together."

CHAPTER VII.

THE DENTIST.

IN the midst of the serious troubles of my valetudinarianism, to add to my burden, I was struck by a new and grievous foe, with deadly aim to destroy my peace of body and mind. I became aware that I

possessed a back-tooth containing a cavern—dark, mysterious, and unholy. The persistency with which that tooth forced its detestable existence upon my attention forced me to serve upon it a notice to quit : and this is how I made the acquaintance of —ugh-h !—the Surgeon-Dentist.

Now, of the many forms of ill to which human flesh is heir, toothache, though the least dangerous, is the most cruel and racking. You remind me that I have said much the same thing about intercostal neuralgia ? I know it ; but intercostal neuralgia is simply toothache in the ribs. I shall patent this definition.

Fever is pretty bad ; a broken limb is good for providing the sufferer with a new volume of expletives ; inflammation is a trifle inconvenient ; dyspepsia and phthisis one would prefer to do without ; but for a good gnawing, tantalizing, diabolically-insistent, wrath-compelling, oath-evoking, and generally-irritating companion, commend me to neuralgia. It depresses all the vital powers, it destroys all the tone and colour of life, it makes one prematurely old and wretched, it brings a man into that prostrate condition in which he falls an easy prey to disease—I question if face-ache be not as bad as any of the most serious illnesses. I say “ face-ache ” because most Dentists hold, now-a-days, that all forms of neuralgia have their origin in the teeth. (“ There is nothing like leather.”)

Now neuralgia may come in face, eye-ball, occiput, synciput—wherever there is a nerve. Mine was the commonest and most cruel form of toothache. It lasted on and off for many months. From the cradle to the grave the teeth are a constant worry to us. I know of nothing more awful than to lie awake, night after night,

listening, listening, listening to the toothache. With all our boasted civilization, human teeth are by no means so excellent and serviceable as those of the animals.

I remember Sir William Ferguson showing me, one day, the skull of an ancient Briton—at least, he *said* it was an ancient Briton—with the remark that Dentists were one of the results of civilization. I daresay he was right; for that ancient Briton possessed a set of teeth that would cost him, now-a-days, five-and-twenty pounds. You could not have told their difference from natural teeth, and the old gentlemen (the Briton) displayed them with a sort of conscious pride. It seems, therefore, that the more civilized people are, the worse their teeth become. It is this sort of moral reflection which makes modern people so happy and contented. Who would not become civilized at the expense of his teeth?

Some people say—"If your tooth aches, out with it!" Others—"Have every blessed tooth in your head out, and get a new set; the Dentist will allow you something for the old ones." This is all very well; but such advisers rarely know what they are talking about. Even the loss of a single tooth is a frightful evil, and the Dentist cannot substitute the real article—he can only *copy* Nature. But bad teeth constitute organic disease; they put a stop to the process of nutrition; they lay the seeds of indigestion, and then—good-bye to lobster salad. Yet, let no Dentist ever persuade you to present him with the contents of your jaws. Get the best medical advice you can; obtain as many opinions as you may be able to command; and when you find that they all agree in

robbing you of your ivory, put the advice in the fire, and think better of it.

What are you to do? Well; you may try a variety of remedies in order to get rid of the incubus. You may put on iron and quinine in order to strengthen your nerves. But this treatment is chronic, and, alas, your suffering is acute. Under paroxysms of pain you venture on sedatives and anodynes. Doubtless these may effect much mitigation and even a temporary cure. It is on occasions like these that Sir Henry Holland would probably introduce his opium pill.

But even supposing that you employ opiates—and some people are very shy of adopting the services of anodynes—there is only one thing to be done, after all; you must go and see that confounded Dentist. Better do it at once, and get it over.

Accordingly, you prepare to pay that visit. You leave home—handkerchief to mouth—in a condition of raging madness. When you tread that path again you will have one member less. You have sworn it. You do not care a twopenny-halfpenny toss for all the Dentists in the world—probes, lancets, and graduated sets of forceps included. Not you. What is it? a mere nothing; one tug, and there you are.

Alack! and alas! thou pitiful hypocrite! self-accused by the growing sense of alarm that increases as the distance to that Dentist's diminishes! Why! what is this! The gnawing demon in that tooth is surely stopping work (for the day); positively the pain is going altogether! There is the Dentist's house—straight in front of you; why not go on, ring the bell, and there an end? "Not so," you say. "Let us pause and consider awhile. The fresh air—idiot that I am to

forget it—has come to my relief. What more stupid custom than to coop one's self up within doors. The pain is gone; I will bask me in the fresh air under the open canopy of heaven;” and away you go. There is no more enchanting way of passing an idle hour than to take up one's station opposite a Dentist's door, and watch the English pluck turning tail as soon as it comes within sight of that desired haven.

But the sequel will inevitably land you in the den of the Dentist. You may procrastinate as long as you like; but there is no help. Enter, then, courageously and smilingly, since go you must; it will be all over in a few minutes.

(*Will it?*)

You are ushered into a waiting-room—filled, of course, with other patients. Naturally you resent their presence; why could they not come another day? You consult the literary pabulum displayed upon the central table;—a list of visitors; Thorley's Almanack; “Thoughts for a Dentist's Waiting-room” (Tract Society); a fly-paper, testifying to its efficacy by the numerous corpses upon it; programme of local cricket engagements, with the Dentist's name under the title “Honorary Members;” a Parish Magazine, with the Dentist's subscriptions to the parochial charities; Bradshaw's Railway Guide (two months old); a local paper (aged three weeks) containing four columns of an indignation meeting on the subject of town drains, with the Dentist's speech and a leading article upon it. And, underneath the mass, a solitary number of *Punch*—which you know by heart! You see, a Dentist is not given to trifling; he desires, above all things, that you should fix your whole and undivided attention upon THAT TOOTH. In case

you are tempted to forget it, the literature is intended to recall your wandering thoughts.

Such, and of a similar nature, was the experience which awaited me when I paid my first visit to the Surgeon-Dentist. I had gone through all the approved formulæ; had set out, resolutely determined not to go back, and had fled after laying a hand on the Dentist's bell-handle. And here I was, endeavouring to extract some crumb of comfort from the various testimonials approving Thorley's food for cattle. After the company had dwindled down I was eventually left alone. From the adjoining room—the torture-chamber—came, at frequent intervals, the *staccato* shrieks of a feminine voice; who would be listening, in turn, to *my* howls? Finally, the shrieks having subsided into moans, the door opened; and my time had come.

I followed the attendant into the cheery operation-room; the usual chair with a screw adjustment for winding one aloft; padded cushions thereto; machinery for (what is called) laughing-gas, wheel and treadle for filing purposes—everything to inspire feelings of ease and comfort. My dental-surgeon met me with a smiling face and a warm grasp of the hand. He invited me to take a seat in the beautiful chair, and to open my mouth—"a little wider, please; wider still; thank you!"

"I see the beggar," he exclaimed joyfully; "you shouldn't keep such a thing as that in your head. Just let me see—whether——"

He began to rummage about his tools; and I watched him out of a corner of one eye.

"Is it"—I faltered—"is it a large tooth? will it take much——?"

"Yes," he replied; "it is a very fair-sized tooth;"

but a plucky fellow like you won't mind that. It will be out before you know anything about it."

I was in for it! Surely, if I knew aught of Dentist's language, there was a warm time coming!

"Don't you think," I suggested, "that you could—er—manage to—a—to *stop* the tooth? It would be so much better if—I am a perfect coward when——"

"My dear Sir," he said, "allow me to know my own business. The tooth is a mere shell. I only hope that it won't break off when I draw it."

I appeal to any man—any Christian man—to say whether this speech was calculated to inspire a fellow-creature with confidence.

I shall not go on with the details. I would rather draw the confidential veil. If I said anything more, I should only afford merriment for the frivolous. I only know that an earthquake came upon that room; the chords of being were riven asunder; fitful blues and greens of vivid lightning played about the apartment, and the solid earth reeled to its base. When the cataclysm had passed, I found that the Dentist was standing before me; in one hand was a tumblerful of tepid water; and, in the other, a pair of forceps with a three-fanged tooth in its claws.

And he had said that it wouldn't "hurt!" He had solemnly assured me that I should "hardly feel it!" He had promised, on his sacred word of honour, that it would be "out in two seconds!" Why, it took three-quarters of an hour—according to *my* reckoning. I scorned his ill-timed sympathy; I hurled his offer of the extracted molar, wrapped in tissue paper, back upon him; I paid the beast, and left him, with the refrain ringing in my ears, "Never again with you,

Robin." I firmly made up my mind that I would never pay a visit to a Dentist's Surgery again, and I have never done so—more than about a dozen times.

The Dentist has developed with the times. He is now the Surgeon-Dentist, and takes his position in the medical hierarchy. Formerly his art was considered the rudest and simplest form of surgery. The barber used to combine the practice of it with hair-cutting and easy shaving. The ordinary tariff was a shilling for each tooth drawn. The importance of the art has risen, and the fees have risen correspondingly. If I go to a West End house, all the appointments are in a style befitting a dignified physician.

The Surgeon-Dentist probably considers with reason that his functions are as important as those of any other medical practitioner. He has now every possible contrivance for a variety of operations that were never used in the days of our grandfathers. For instance, there is the tooth that wants filing. A sharp tooth may cut the tongue, and may produce any amount of mischief. The Dentist sets to work with wheel and file, and the evil is obviated. Then the art of manufacturing artificial teeth has been carried to a wonderful degree of perfection. I know one of the most distinguished orators of the day who tells me that it is a positive enjoyment to him to have a new artificial tooth put in. The Dentist can do everything except abolish pain. He will do that under certain circumstances, but it is a source of much purer happiness to him if this operation is entirely *au naturel*. He will give you nitrous acid—which led to the discovery of chloroform—and he will give chloroform itself, but reluctantly. He thinks it hardly worth while to use

such a powerful agent except for a serious operation. In my own opinion, if not in his, drawing a tooth is a serious operation. He is afraid to venture on it, especially if he has an inkling that there is any weakness of the heart. A friend of mine administered chloroform in five thousand cases. He only failed in two of them. And the reason of those two failures was that he did not give enough chloroform. The patients wished their sufferings to be deadened, but they did not wish entirely to lose consciousness. The result was that they encountered severe pain when they were unprepared for it, and the sudden shock killed them.

I say nothing as to the constantly recurring cases where a Dentist lays hold of a sound tooth instead of the afflicted one. The polite and guarded language which is *de rigueur* in a published book is ridiculously inadequate to express exactly what I should like to say. Mark Twain once said that the leaves of an uncut book were provocative of more profanity than anything else he could remember. Evidently he had forgotten the spontaneous flow of oratory which rises to a sufferer's lips when he discovers, by the aid of an investigating tongue, that there is a *hiatus valde deflendus* next door but one to an aching tooth.

But I should like to ask why it is that the grinning Dentist affectionately hands you your tooth as something you may like to keep as a souvenir of a pleasant morning. You eye it curiously. It is a part, and yet not a part, of yourself. You feel in a sort of museum where a human tooth is exhibited for the first time in history. You conclude to leave it where it is, and not to enshrine it among the *κειμήλια* of your household. You don't desire to preserve the cuttings of your hair

and the parings of your nails. Which things are an allegory. This used up, played out body of ours, which has been changed over and over again any number of times, will be cast away like the hair, the nail cuttings, and the obliterated tooth. But our identity will still remain, an immortality separate from the accidents of humanity.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY IDEAL DOCTOR—THE COMING MAN.

IT is rather difficult to give a description of an Ideal Doctor, and at the same time a very simple description will go a very long way. My Ideal Doctor is *the man who will cure me*.

If I am a rheumatic or a gouty subject my Ideal Doctor is the highest living authority upon gout and rheumatism. If I am down with a fever, my Ideal Doctor is the best fever Doctor. Our intercourse is not like that which we have with our intimate friends and associates. We are circles that only touch one another at a single point—the malady is the point of contact. Neither am I able to make up my mind whether Mr. So and So is an Ideal Doctor or not. It is a matter that can only be verified by results. I may form my idea of a Doctor, and in a platonic world of real existences there may be a corresponding being. But beyond the office of the healer there would by no means be unanimity respecting what constitutes an Ideal Doctor.

It is possible, however, to lay down certain principles outside which a Doctor cannot possibly be my Ideal Doctor.

It is an old and true saying that a surgeon ought to have an eagle's eye, a lady's hand, and a lion's heart. For the successful operator all these, in whatever measure that may be attainable, are necessary. The annals of surgical science, especially of late years, are full of the triumphs of the operating room; in multitudes of cases through anæsthetics the painless triumphs show that the eye, the hand, the heart, fulfil the proverb. It is a wonderful thing to see a man stand at the operating table with hundreds of students, and watch some crucial operation performed where the minutest error would make all the difference between life and death; some of which have only been known within recent years, and have saved already numberless lives.

The first and most absolute requisite for my Ideal Doctor is that he should have the power of sympathy. Sympathy, genuine and intense sympathy, is one of the greatest requisites of the art of medicine. In the majority of cases it is not the greatest medical or greatest surgical art that is required. The case may be very plain sailing, and no two Doctors would exhibit any special difference of treatment. In each case there is a personal and moral element which is its most important factor, and to some extent determines the treatment. There is an Eastern story that a Dervish met the Plague returning from Egypt. "How many have you killed?" said the Dervish. "I killed five thousand," was the answer. "I heard it was a hundred and five thousand," retorted the Dervish. "No," said

the Plague; "I only killed five thousand; it was Fear who killed the rest."

One office of a Doctor is to act as a counter-agent against panic. He has to control, to soothe, to encourage. If he cannot heal a disease, he can do his best to strengthen his patient and alleviate his symptoms. All the grace of society, all the veneer of manner, will do little unless there is some real spring of compassion in his heart. The patient feels instinctively whether or not there is this feeling towards him. He yearns towards it as flowers yearn towards the sunlight. He knows too that when there is genuine sympathy it gives a swift insight into the understanding of a patient's disposition, and greatly helps towards the adequate consideration of his case.

Of course, one of the first things that we require of a Doctor is that he should be a gentleman. It would be intolerable to think that our wives and daughters should be treated by others than gentlemen. But there is such a thing as "the gentlemanly heresy," even with Doctors. And if a man be as rough as Abernethy—and Abernethy after all was a man of kind good heart—that is better than being treated by an incapable Adonis. There is no doubt that many ladies are greatly attracted by a man of tact, address, pleasant talk, and winning manners. And remembering this, "manners makyth man," that "manners are the fruit of noble mind," they are not far wrong. Only the one object in having a Doctor is to get cured, and nothing must divert our attention from this grand essential.

It ought also to be remembered to the infinite credit of physicians, and for the procuring for them of some measure of that sympathy that we patients desiderate

for ourselves, that they often run great risk and danger on our behalf. The martyrdoms of medical men are constant. People sometimes say that Doctors seem to possess an immunity from disease, and that some divine, special protection is supernaturally theirs. No doubt a man gets courage and confidence when he knows that he is rigidly moving in the paths of duty. No doubt, also, a sensible Doctor has his own measures of caution and prevention, which may be excellent. But he often really goes into his profession as a soldier goes into the battle-field. Often he falls at the post of honour and of duty. Everyone knows how bravely in times of epidemic the Doctor clings to his post; no one more courageous than he when every heart is appalled. But I have noticed how one Doctor, and then another, and then another has dropped, while pursuing daily practice, through infection from patients; here from blood poisoning, there from scarlatina, etc. I knew one distinguished Doctor who held very strongly the germ-theory of disease, as I suppose most of them do, whose life was a constant martyrdom. Whenever he attended an infectious case he returned home and told his wife that the end was come at last, that an obnoxious germ had found its way into his system, and that he had only to wait for the full development of the disease. He did at last fall on the field, but not in the way he looked for, but through sheer overwork, the rock ahead for so many of us.

When our Doctor gets ill, perhaps we say to him, "Physician, heal thyself." No doubt he is most ready to do so, if only he could. As a rule a Doctor is not a good patient. He knows too much about medicine to allow himself to be happy and resigned. He knows all

about the unpleasant possibilities of a case, how a complication may arise, and to what bad issue things may turn. It is all the worse for him if he happens to be a nervous man, which he generally is. A Doctor is very unwilling to treat himself. It frequently happens also that he is very unwilling to treat his wife. The Doctors of his neighbourhood are very willing to treat him without expense, as he himself would do, if his own case were that of any one of theirs. *Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.* If he has retired from practice he loses the legal because customary privileges, but even then it is most likely that the medical man who attends him will cry, "dog don't eat dog," and will refuse any honorarium. It is rather a remarkable circumstance, and a credit to the profession, that medical men sometimes say that, in case of serious illness, the man under whose treatment they would like to place themselves, is the old-fashioned general practitioner.

Then I consider that a Doctor ought to hold himself debtor to his profession. When his profession is an honour to a man, the man ought to be an honour to his profession. He should keep in view not only his own name and his own interests, but honour and love the great cause with which he is connected, and seek to add to the sum of its usefulness. Every medical man, out of his own knowledge and experience, ought to be able to make some contribution to the general stock. It is not necessary that he should write a book. Medical books are sometimes written from the desire to create a practice, and sometimes they are written out of an abundance of practice, which is quite a superior kind of article not very common. Such a science as medicine can only make great advances by the co-operation of many minds.

The most orthodox practitioners are frequently very empiric ; that is to say, by long experience and diligent use of his faculties a medical man may acquire great experience in dealing with some class of cases. But his special knowledge remains locked up in his own bosom. It is information which he has not imparted, and which is lost with himself; perhaps presently to be re-discovered by another. So an ideal medical man, if he has anything to say, will say it for the good of Society, and also for his own reputation ; for unhappily all human motives are more or less mixed motives.

There is one drawback, however, in the matter of reporting cases of which medical literature largely consists. I have heard of a medical student being greatly distressed when he heard a surgical lecturer minutely describing and discussing his own father's case. Once a patient happened to take up a medical paper, and began reading a long and interesting communication from a medical man. He had not read far when he made the discovery that it was his own case. When he came to the end of it he found that the case was considered absolutely hopeless. His Doctor never spoke plainly to him, and indeed had held out hopes, being of opinion that this was the best way of treating him. The discovery was such a shock that he did not long survive it. Personally I do not think I should mind any amount of discussion in such cases, of course withholding name and address. I think it ought to be a consolation to us patients that we are increasing the sum of knowledge, and doing our mite towards lessening the sum of misery. I remember the case of a brave Scotchman in a hospital, who absolutely exulted when he saw a hundred students

gathering round the operating table, where he was to lose a limb, saying that he felt it a grand thing to be of use to such a lot of laddies.

Doctors, taken as a profession, are the most humane and charitable of men. It might almost be thought that familiarity with suffering would blunt their sympathies, and incapacitate them for this higher and more sacred part of their functions. But here comes in the working of the great moral law which Bishop Butler has traced out for us. If feeling emotion alone is kindled, and there is no corresponding action, then the sensibility becomes coarsened and is killed. But if the feeling is carried out by beneficent action, then the feeling is refined and intensified, and the action becomes more skilful and valuable. The greater the experience of the true physician, the better is he able to enter into each individual case, and the more prompt and valuable will be his services. The Ideal Doctor will be a man of this class.

A Doctor should have a perfect love of truth. If there is anything that baffles and evades him in a case, he should not hesitate to say so, if not to others, at least to himself. No one who knows the breadth of the field of human knowledge and the limitation of human faculties, would have any the worse opinion of him for such an acknowledgment. But at all events let him not hesitate to act decisively and at once on the discovery of his own comparative incompetency to deal with some special difficulty. He has first to make the confession of weakness to himself, which is often the hardest thing of all, and then to insist that further advice should be called in. The patient's friends will congratulate themselves that they have a medical attendant of such candour and promptitude.

There is one point on which I think Doctors are to blame. They are, sometimes, not sufficiently frank on the gravity of a case, with the patient himself, or with the patient's friends. I have known cases in which a patient has been dying, and they have said nothing to the sufferer or his friends of the urgency and hopelessness of his case, and the Doctor himself was a most worthy man. I believe that the reason generally is that the Doctor is afraid to precipitate matters by a disclosure of the facts, and so hasten the end. I was remonstrating with a medical man one day with his conduct in matters of this kind, for he had told me that only in two instances had he made such an announcement at a dying bed.

In one of these instances he had told the patient that he had not long to live, and he was then asked how long the patient would have to live, asked by the patient himself.

"I do not think that it is possible for you to live beyond nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

Then the patient got into a great passion, "I do not want to see your face again. There is the door. Walk! Get out!"

Yet before nine o'clock the end came. My friendly physician, being asked about the other case, said that the effect of his frankness was good. He had allowed the patient a month, and in this case also the prediction was verified. But the month was well and wisely laid out. The patient did all he could to settle things, both for this life and that which is to come. It is best to know the truth whatever it be. "Let us die in the daylight," said Ajax—*έν δὲ φάει καὶ ὄλεσσον*.

Lastly, Ideal Doctors ought to be able to realize the

words of the great Sydenham, who, in his autobiography, says: "Whoever takes up medicine should seriously consider the following points: Firstly, that he must one day surrender to the Supreme Judge an account of the lives of those sick men who have been entrusted to his care. Secondly, that such skill and science as, by the blessing of God, he has attained, are to be especially directed towards the honour of his Maker and the welfare of his fellow creatures, since it is a base thing for the great gifts of heaven to become the servants of avarice and ambition. Thirdly, he must remember that it is no mean ignoble animal that he deals with. We may ascertain the worth of the human race, since for its sake God's only-begotten Son became man, and thereby ennobled the nature that He took upon Him. Lastly, he must remember that he himself hath no exception from the common lot, but that he is bound by the same laws of mortality, and liable to the same ailments and afflictions with his fellows. For these and like reasons let him strive to render aid to the distressed with the greatest care, the kindest spirit, and with the strongest fellow-feeling."

CHAPTER IX.

A CHAPTER OF ANECDOTES.

AND now quite a long procession of medical men passes before me—those whom I consulted at home, and those whom I met when I went into different winter quarters. Moreover, I have to make the shame-

less confession that I was not altogether loyal to the illustrious physicians who had treated me so well. Even in London I would go to one Doctor after another, hoping that some favourable feature in my case had been overlooked, some remedy left untried, some useful hint unimparted. There is a regular class of such wandering Christians, whom Doctors know very well, and with whom they are not great favourites. I cannot say that I took much by the notion. My case was a perfectly well-defined one, and nothing in the way of originality of treatment was to be expected, and, if employed, should be viewed with suspicion. Moreover, such wandering Christians might reflect that they may incur some risk in leaving Doctors who know their cases and constitutions for those who have yet to make their acquaintance with them.

The society of medical men has always possessed a great fascination for me. I have found them a very interesting set of men. Whilst the Doctors are taking stock of their patients, in one sense the patients are taking stock of the Doctors. They have a generic likeness to each other and special differences. For instance, you meet with one Doctor who will hardly say a word to you, and then with another who will hardly let you say a word for yourself. The one man listens dryly, encourages you to talk, hears perhaps a little cynically whatever you have to say, and then dismisses you with the invariable prescription. Another keeps up a rattling conversation from first to last, anticipates all you have to tell him, interprets everything for you, and hardly gives you a chance of explaining your feelings and wishes. They will all indulge in a little sententious wisdom in which there is the suspicion of a snub. One told me that

the best prescription was, "When you are well, keep well." He added the epigrammatic remark that every acute case is in reality chronic. The family Doctor generally gives the same advice as the family lawyer—that we must take time. A Doctor being asked what was best for the sciatica, once answered "Six weeks!"

Some Doctors are famous for their wonderful science, but they are not always the most successful and the most valued on that account. Others are famous for their wonderful manner, their tact, and sympathy, and devotion. When you have obtained a combination of these rare qualities you have carried every point—the man is *totus, teres atque rotundus*. I have in mind a great physician, some of whose cures have seemed almost miraculous, but who was quite capable of employing a certain amount of humbug when that appeared to be an appropriate mode of treatment, and more likely to be efficacious than any other.

There was an amiable lady, for instance, who, to say the least, was indiscreet in diet. It is this kind of error which makes half the work for the Doctors. She suffered a great deal from indigestion, and as the delicate creature could make a hearty supper on pork chops and lobsters, this could hardly be wondered at. Her medical attendant contrived to make a nice little annuity out of her. It was from this gentleman that I obtained the remainder of my story. She had heard a great deal of a certain famous physician, and nothing would satisfy her save that her ordinary medical man should call him into consultation. In vain my friend assured her that it was an ordinary case, with which he felt himself quite competent to deal. She was quite offended at the idea, and

insisted that she was experiencing most extraordinary symptoms. The Court physician was accordingly called in, and the family Doctor explained the case to him amidst hearty laughter. They agreed, however, that it was necessary to take the case *au grand sérieux*. They saw the old lady together, and the utmost latitude was allowed her in detailing her interesting ailment. The physician looked at the general practitioner, and said, "We had now better retire into the dining-room, and consult." A pleasant quarter of an hour was spent in professional gossip, and the exchange of general ideas. They were then ushered into the drawing-room once more. The great man addressed the lady in tones that were positively awful. He began,

"We have consulted together, Madam, respecting your deeply interesting case, and it now becomes my duty to communicate to you the conclusions at which we have unanimously arrived."

The old lady felt that here at least was an enlightened physician, on whose science and candour she could absolutely rely.

"I need hardly say, Madam, that I substantially agree with your able and talented medical attendant, but perhaps my longer experience may enable me to supply a lacuna."

The old lady was wonderfully impressed, especially with the lacuna, of which she had never previously heard. In her own mind she supposed it was some new drug.

"You are not suffering, Madam, from neuralgia, as some people might thoughtlessly suppose. Your complaint is neurosis."

I may observe that no man has ever been able to find

out the difference between neurosis and neuralgia, though it is to be supposed that there is a difference.

"Here is my prescription, Madam," handing her half a sheet of note paper, "which I hope and believe will do you good. Some people might smile at it, but I can assure you"—here he dropped his voice into a most effective stage whisper—"that it is one which has cost me the anxious thought of years."

The prescription was rhubarb and magnesia.

When a Doctor is in the full tide of practice, when he is the fashionable rage—a most lucrative condition of things—the amount of practice which he can "rush" is extraordinary. A hospital Doctor can clear off patients at the rate of one in two minutes. In the culminating years of success the fashionable physician will not take so very much longer. A look, a word, a touch on the pulse, a peep at the tongue, a rapidly-written prescription, a fee proffered and grasped—*voilà tout*. That is to say, in *ordinary* cases. Sometimes the condition of things is reversed as in the following instance.

One day a tall military man entered the sanctum of a reigning physician, briefly explained his malady, received his prescription, and planked his fee like a man. Time, by a Benson's chronometer, two minutes ten seconds and a fifth.

"I am very glad to have met you, Doctor," said the patient, taking up his hat, "particularly as I have often heard my father, Colonel Champneys, speak of you most affectionately."

"What!" exclaimed the Doctor, quite moved. "Are you Dick Champneys' son, my very best and oldest friend?"

“None other, Doctor; and those are just the terms in which my father has described you to me.”

“My dear fellow,” said the Doctor, pointing to the prescription, “just put that absurd bit of paper into the fire, and sit down quietly, and let me know what’s the matter with you.”

One day—so runs the story—a Doctor had a call from a certain patient. This Doctor was a specialist, and his speciality was the heart.

The patient detailed his case. His heart was the trouble—weak heart. For a good, respectable, chronic disease, which may go on for many years, causing some suffering, but often doing no real mischief, the heart does very well. The heart illness which gives no notice and causes no pain—that is generally the worst. The Doctor examined and pondered for some time, and came to the conclusion that if there was any mischief, it was functional and not organic.

He gave him a prescription, and told him to call again in about six months.

“And what about my diet?” asked the patient.

“Well, be careful; but don’t stint yourself. Live rather generously than otherwise. By the bye, do you ever take a shower bath?”

“I don’t think that I have ever taken one.”

“Well, try it on. A shower bath is a very wholesome thing. Take one every now and then.”

Six months after, the patient made his appearance again. He was much the same as he was before. Perhaps he was a little better; at least the Doctor said so. It is to be observed that it is almost a formula with a Doctor, unless there is grave reason to the contrary,

to say that a patient is better. Only it sometimes happens that, in the midst of all the betternesses, the patient dies.

After a few encouraging remarks the man with a weak heart rose to go.

"Wait a moment," said the Doctor. "I have, of course, a question to ask you. Did you take a shower bath, as I advised?"

"Certainly I did. I have taken them frequently."

"That is very satisfactory—very satisfactory indeed," said the Doctor, rubbing his hands. "I was very strongly of opinion that there was nothing organically wrong with your heart. If there had been, you know, the first shower bath would have killed you."

Per contra, I may mention another item in my own experience. I became acquainted with a very distinguished physician whose name was for very many a household word. He prescribed for me the Turkish bath. I was to buy a number of tickets and to work through them at the rate of two or three a week. Now I knew my illustrious friend was very much overworked, and I suspected that he sometimes ran one case with another. I have known worthy clerics run a morning sermon into an evening sermon if they had not had a rest and a dinner between the two. So I let a day pass by and then asked the learned physician if a course of Turkish baths would not be a good thing for me. "Turkish baths, Sir," he responded oracularly, "are good things, admirable things, but not for you, Sir, *not for you*. My advice is not to take one of them on any account."

But even if Doctors make demonstrable blunders,

unless they proceed from inattention or *crassa ignorantia*, I should not be hard upon them. I cannot buy infallibility from them; I can only hope to get the best they can give. If you give an enormous fee to some barrister, you can only buy the chance of his being able to plead for you. If you give a big fee to some great singer you just buy the chance of his being able to sing to you. The barrister may be engaged everywhere, and the singer may have a sore throat, and then where are you? So you may go to a Doctor, and you may presume that he will give you the best that is in him, but what that may amount to is an unknown quantity, and one that may not be solved.

For instance, I know a man who likes his beer. He takes it very moderately, but likes to take it with some regularity. Slightly altering the words of Goldsmith's ballad he would say that

"Man wants but little beer below,
But wants that little strong."

He went to a Doctor who told him that every drop of beer he took was deadly poison. He did not like this and determined to change his Doctor until he met with one that would recommend beer. The very next Doctor he went to told him that a light glass of Burton beer should be taken regularly at his lunch. Finding, however, that he did not improve so much as he wished under the beer diet—which is perhaps not altogether to be wondered at—he went back to the first Doctor, who was a pronounced teetotaler, on whom beer had the effect that a red rag has on a bull. "I have no hesitation in saying, Sir," said the Doctor, "that in your state of health a glass of beer might have a fatal

effect." My friend having been forbidden beer by his physician cheerfully gave it up. He possessed that ingenuous state of mind in which he argued, that having put himself into a Doctor's hands it was only right that he should implicitly obey directions. Accordingly he rigorously abstained and went at the end of a month to report himself to his physician. "Have you been taking any beer, Sir," demanded the latter with an aspect of inflexible severity. "But I will not trouble you to answer. I can tell for myself. Have the goodness to look at me, Sir." My friend lifted up his candid eyes, but their mute eloquence was lost upon the Doctor. "No necessity for a second look, Sir. I perceive you have persisted in the depraved habit of beer drinking." My friend solemnly declared that he had touched nothing but water for weeks past, which I fully believe, though I think that is more than the Doctor did.

It was a Doctor of this kind who took a rooted objection to smoking. He had an idea that every man smoked, and that smoking was very bad for every man. He was called in to a patient who had his troubles, but in his own mind the Doctor determined that excessive smoking was the root of the mischief.

The Doctor gave him some directions, wrote a prescription, and said, "You will smoke one cigar a day." The patient came back in due course, and was severely questioned on the subject of smoking.

"Well, Doctor," said the patient, "I have carried out all your directions with the greatest care, except as to what you said about smoking." Here the Doctor's face darkened, and he looked most severe. "But I

never was a smoker, and I do not like smoking, and I find that a cigar every day is more than I can possibly manage."

I think the patient scored.

Sometimes the misses, the mistakes, of medical men, are disastrous and annoying, but sometimes they make marvellous hits. For instance, I have heard of a patient who was cured by a curious prescription, after he had been quite given up. The great physician who was called in recommended that the patient should be closely packed in ice, and have a tablespoonful of brandy administered every hour. He recovered. I knew of another case in which the patient was suffering from the degeneracy of a vital organ. The Doctor calculated that the organ would hold out for a twelve-month longer. At the end of a year the patient called, fresh and vigorous as it seemed, and declared himself very much better. The Doctor shook his head sadly. "My dear fellow, I am very sorry, but I can only give you a fortnight more to live." He died within the fortnight.

Such predictions are probably for the most part correct, but it also happens, and not unfrequently, that they are falsified by results. The proverbial uncertainty of human affairs is no doubt a proper and powerful reason for the reticence of Doctors. I have been informed of a case in which the Doctors gave a young fellow just a twelvemonth to live. He made up his mind for what he called a short life and a merry one. He went in for every form of extravagant expense. He denied himself nothing, being determined to get what-

ever value he could for his money before he had to go. At the end of a twelvemonth, to the great surprise of everyone, and especially the Doctors, he found himself quite well. But in the meantime he had worked through all his property, and had to begin life again little better than a beggar.

Again; I knew a patient whose life was condemned successively by three medical men. He had bronchitis, with some functional disturbance to the heart, and his symptoms closely simulated those of consumption. The local practitioner, with the eagle eye of genius, passed sentence upon him at once. He was induced, with some coaxing, to call in the aid of another local Doctor, who thought it only etiquette to express his entire agreement with the regular family attendant. The patient had the ill-taste to be dissatisfied even with this combined medical judgment, and to call for the advice of a famous consulting physician, who passed the same verdict in still sterner accents. The case was pronounced to be that of unmistakable consumption. This happened thirty years ago, and the only consumption has been that of a whole drove of beasts and poultry, not to mention acres of garden stuff during that period.

But what is rather irritating about a Doctor is, that as Lord Melbourne said of Macaulay, he is always so cock sure about everything. He gives you the idea that he possesses a profundity of knowledge of which your unassisted reason can hardly form any conception. He is unwavering, unhesitating, in what you must accept as his *ipse dixit*. Only once or twice in my

life have I heard a Doctor deliberately say, "I don't know." Expostulation is vain with him. He, if any man, knows how to give a pitying smile, and in many cases if you say much in opposition to his ideas, he is willing to wash his hands of you. He will not condescend to argue with you, but if he does, he assumes as a postulate in every discussion that his own infallibility is admitted.

There is sometimes a good deal of the Don Pomposo about the Doctor. He looks big, and talks big, and there is something physically overbearing in his voice and gestures. Occasionally he attaches the most absurd importance to the merest trifle.

"Well, Sir," said a Doctor in a most commanding tone, "tell me how you live. Describe your day, describe your dinner."

"My dinner is the usual thing, three or four simple courses—soup, fish, joint or entrée, or perhaps both joint and entrée. Sometimes, but not very often, pudding or cheese."

"Well, Sir, but what do you drink?"

"I wait till the end of the first course, and then I take a glass of sherry."

"That is very wrong, very wrong indeed. You should not take it at the end of the first course, but at the beginning of the second," which we may venture to consider a distinction without a difference.

There are some Doctors who pride themselves on their prescriptions, and who have a morbid objection to patients "wanting to know, you know"—wanting to know what they are going to take. I consider that

this is a matter in which a patient may have a perfectly legitimate curiosity.

“If there’s one man whom I hate more than another,” said a Doctor to me—and, I have no doubt, with an oblique reference to myself—“it’s a fellow who fancies he’s got a smattering of medicine, and wants to know what I am putting into my prescriptions.”

I find, for the most part, that Doctors of the highest eminence are not inclined to make any mystery about their prescriptions.

But I have known second-rate Doctors resent, as a sort of insult, the patient’s modest request that he may be favoured with a translation of the dog-Latin of the prescription. I suppose that physicking, like preaching, must be mixed with faith on the part of them that take it. But what cabalistic charm belongs to the formula of the prescription, which evaporates when it is known, I cannot imagine.

Even now Doctors will sometimes speak with a directness that recalls Abernethy. A man had a clever boy whose state of health caused him some anxiety. He sent his child with the governess to see a consulting physician. The Doctor liked his little patient, thought him over-taxed, and thought that he ought to have a long holiday. “I shall not write a prescription,” said the great man. “The child must not do any lessons for the next three months, but must run about and amuse himself.” “Oh, I hardly think Mr. Jones will allow that,” was the answer. “I know he is very anxious that Master Percy should get on, and stick well to his books.” “You don’t think he will follow my advice?” said Sir William. “Then give my compli-

ments, Sir William ——'s compliments to Mr. Jones, and tell him that he is a fool, and that his son will become an idiot." The lady had not, however, done Mr. Jones justice, who promptly took the Doctor's advice with the greatest benefit to his son.

The amount of pressure brought to bear upon young brains at the present day is often disastrously heavy. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ought to interfere. A clever boy, by winning a scholarship at one of the great public schools, may save his father some fifteen hundred pounds. And even if a man is too wealthy to care for the money he likes the son to have the credit, and the credit is also reflected on himself. The combination of *κῦδος* and *κέρδος* is irresistible. But it is found that these clever boys at school do not turn out to be the cleverest men at college or the cleverest men in the world. The goodness of the soil is used up at too early a date. Life is a long game and not a short game, and a spurt at the first is not good policy.

I knew a man who had pupils, and who bore facts of this kind carefully in mind. They are a minority among schoolmasters who do so. All schoolmasters want to do themselves and their schools credit by bringing forward clever boys, but the best test of success is the doing all he can for the dull or average boy.

This tutor had a pupil who was a delicate little chap with a great aptitude for his books, which he studied at all times and all occasions when his tutor would much rather have seen him swimming or playing cricket. So one day he began very serenely with the youth.

"I hear, my dear child, that you are very fond of your book."

"Oh yes, Sir," he answered with a conscious glow of righteous self-approbation.

"I hear that when lessons are over and the other boys at their games, you lie under the oaks studying your Latin."

"Yes, Sir."

"And at night you read till the candles are taken away."

The boy admitted this soft impeachment.

"And in the morning when you awake, you take your books from underneath your pillow and go at them again."

"Yes," said the boy, evidently expecting approving words and smiles.

"Now look here, my young friend. I don't allow this sort of thing, and if I find you doing your lessons out of hours, I'll give you the jolliest hiding you ever had in your life. Understand that now."

There never was such a thorough *bouleversement* of all his ideas as that boy underwent. But it was probably the making of a healthy boy of him.

Two illustrations may be given here as an exemplification of the adage that we must fare far afield in order to learn home news. One case is that of Dr. Darwin, of Derby, whose life has been written by his grandson, the illustrious author of the *Origin of Species* and so many other scientific works with which we are all more or less acquainted. One day, a distinguished physician in London received a visitor from the country. The patient had a sad tale to tell. The symptoms

were serious and urgent. The disease was difficult and obscure, and afforded little likelihood of cure or palliation. All this the physician honestly explained.

"It is an illness of which we Doctors have very little knowledge. It is very rare, and indeed hopeless. There is only one man in England who understands it at all. It might be worth your while to go down into the country to consult him. It is Dr. Darwin, of Derby."

"Alas!" was the answer, "I am Dr. Darwin, of Derby."

The case reminds one of Hegel's last words, "There is only one man that understands me—and he doesn't."

A man came up from Scotland to consult a famous London physician. He heard him patiently, and then said, "In a case like yours you ought to consult Dr.—, of Edinburgh. He is the greatest living authority on the subject."

"Well, bless my soul," said the patient. "I have been living next door to that man for the last sixteen years, and have never thought of consulting him."

Children, again, furnish many amusing instances of their power to upset a Doctor's calculations. I once knew a young Doctor who was the happy possessor of a single patient. It was his one pet ewe lamb. The little creature lived next door, being his landlord's son, which may have had something to do with his being called in professionally. Anyhow, the child had all the advantage—or disadvantage—of being close to the Doctor, who used to pop in at all hours of the day or night.

"And how is the little boy?" I asked him one morning.

“ Oh, he’s very bad, poor little chap. Water on the brain. Hydrocephalus.”

“ Has he any chance ? ”

“ I am afraid not. He is about as bad as he can be.”

In answer to my enquiry the next day he told me that there was no hope, and the child must go.

The next day I found my friend sitting before a row of books.

“ Confound that child,” he said ; “ he has got every fatal symptom mentioned in Reynolds’ System of Medicine, and yet the little beggar won’t die.”

And in fact the child did not die, either of the disease or of the Doctor.

I have often bantered my friend on account of his faulty prognosis, but he always stands to his guns.

“ We are only Doctors, we are not deities. Of course we make our mistakes, and it is only human to do so. And of course we sometimes suffer at a disadvantage, as in the case of the young American Doctor that Sala tells us about.”

“ What was that ? ”

“ A young Doctor was sent for to see a child—which happens to be my own case just now—his one patient. He looked at the child and was for some time very much puzzled to know what to do with it ; at last he said, ‘ We must approach this case by a sort of circular treatment. The child’s got Scarlatina. Now I’m not posted up in Scarlatina, but I’ll tell you what I’ll do, I’ll give it some powder. That will send it into fits. Then send for me. *I’m a stunner for fits !* ’ ”

And yet, after all, we cannot do without the much-maligned Doctor. Let a man once be taken away from

his everyday occupation, and laid by the heels upon a bed of pain, and the Doctor becomes—for the time—the most desirable object in the whole Creation.

We wait anxiously for him, and at last he comes. His carriage is in the street, his well-known knock at the door. At least he will do something that will lessen suspense and anxiety. He will tell us clearly what is the matter, and what is to be done. This will be a great relief. We may have some idea of the nature of the trouble, but he tells us definitely and authoritatively what it is. He gives us his directions, and it is something to have and to carry out such directions. For many days to come he is the ruling spirit of that sick chamber and that anxious household. His word is law, and there is no appeal. His regular visit is the one event of the day to which we look forward. We may have our jest at his expense when we are well, but we should be sorry creatures without him when we are ill.

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